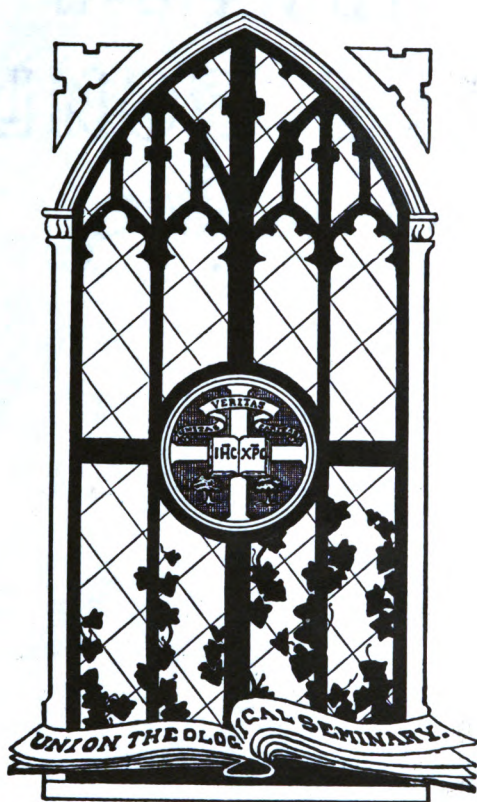

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A
CONFERENCE
ON THE
AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH:

Held March 1st, 1679,

BETWEEN

JAMES BENIGNUS BOSSUET,
Bishop of Condom (afterwards of Meaux),

AND

JOHN CLAUDE,
Calvinist Minister at Charenton.

TOGETHER WITH

REFLECTIONS
ON A TREATISE BY M. CLAUDE,
BY THE BISHOP OF CONDOM.

First American, from the last London Edition.

BALTIMORE:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURPHY,
146 MARKET STREET.
1842.

P R E F A C E

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

IN no country is Protestantism more active than in the United States, in endeavoring to uphold its discordant principles, and consequently no where does the evil call for a more powerfully counteracting influence. The ablest controversial works for undeceiving our dissenting brethren, are those which point out the fallacies of the Protestant system, and expose its utter inconsistency with the plainest maxims of Christian morality. Among the works of this class, the "Conference between Bossuet and Claude" has always been considered of the highest merit and of surpassing interest; and it is now offered to the public, under the conviction that it will be found a most valuable accession to the polemical literature that is in circulation amongst us.

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PREFACE TO THE LONDON EDITION.

THE seventeenth century is remarkable for the many conferences, polemical or conciliatory, held between divines of the Catholic and Protestant communions. Without attempting to furnish a complete list, we may mention that of Ratisbon in 1601, that of Neuburg in 1615, that of Thorn in 1645, which, from the benevolent object of its promoter, King Uladislas IV., who had at heart the reunion of the Lutherans and Calvinists with his own Church, obtained the name of the "Charitable" conference; and finally, another held some time after at Rheinfelt, by order of the Landgrave of Hesse, between Valerianus Magnus, a Capuchin, and Peter Habercorn, a Calvinist minister.

These controversial discussions, like those which had taken place in the preceding century,—at Leipsic (1519), between Eckius, chancellor of Ingolstadt, and Luther, with his associate Carlostadius; at Poissy (1561), between Beza and Peter Martyr, on the part of the Huguenots, and D'Espence, De Saintes, and Lainez, on the Catholic side,—were conducted in public. Others were carried on in private or before a small company. The long continued consultation between the Lutheran Gerard Walther (more generally known under the name of Molanus), and Spinola bishop of Neustadt,* deserves notice, on account of the overtures for conciliation to which it was the prelude, and the negotiations which were opened to that effect at the close of the seventeenth century.

Our own country had its conferences also, although these were chiefly polemical. Amongst the number may be mentioned those of Fisher with Dean White and Archbishop Laud,

* See an interesting account of this amiable and zealous man in the *Dublin Review* for May, 1841.

in the time of Charles I., and that between Andrew Pulton, a Scotch Jesuit, and Dr. Tenison, in the year 1687.

In none of these controversial encounters will the combatants appear to have been more equally matched, or the respective cause of the parties more keenly and skilfully maintained, than in that to which the reader is presently to be introduced. The ability of Bossuet, as a controvertist, is allowed on all hands; and although the celebrity of his adversary is not of the same extent, his works being read but little at the present day, no one can refuse him the praise of consummate address and energy. If ever the cause of the "Reformation" and its principles were brought to a fair test, it was at this celebrated **CONFERENCE**.

John Claude, the son of a Calvinist minister, was born in 1619, at Sauvetat, near Agen, in the south of France. After holding the theological chair at Nismes for eight years, he removed to the capital, and in 1666 was chosen minister of Charonton, a small town in its vicinity. He soon distinguished himself by elaborate controversial writings; and in 1679 held the conference with Bossuet. Upon the revocation of the edict of Nantes, in 1685, he withdrew to Holland, and died there in 1687.

Claude is described as a man of unimpeachable character and great sweetness of temper. His writings partake, it is true, of the acrimony which is an ordinary ingredient of controversy. But from this few works of that time were exempt. It is a happy but rare distinction which belongs to Bossuet, that he is earnest without being intemperate, and that his vehemence is without invective.

The following preface will acquaint the reader with the occasion of Bossuet's publishing his account of the conference. It may be proper to add some particulars not there mentioned, which serve to explain the history of the publication of the subjoined **REFLECTIONS**.

It will be seen that Bossuet declares in his preface—"Wherever M. Claude shall say that he did not acknowledge what I make him acknowledge in the recital of the Conference, I engage myself in a second conference to draw again from him the same acknowledgment; and wherever he shall say that he was not without an answer, I will, without any other argument than such as he has heard already, force him to answers so manifestly absurd, that every man of good sense shall acknowledge that to have been silent would have been better than to have made use of them. And lest it should be said (for in an affair that concerns the salvation of souls we must, as much as may be, obviate every objection), lest then, once more, it should be said that M. Claude became involved in these embarrassments by some untoward lapse, I, on the contrary, affirm that this advantage is so inherent to our cause, that there is no minister, no doctor, no man living, but must in the same manner sink under the like arguments. Whosoever will make trial of it, will see that this is no idle promise."

Bossuet did not intend this to pass as an idle flourish, but offered a serious challenge, and was very earnest that it should be accepted. He repeatedly pressed Claude to consent to a second meeting. This, however, Claude declined, alleging that it would be acting in defiance of the king's prohibition against such conferences. This alleged hindrance Bossuet undertook to remove, and obtained every necessary authorization for the purpose, in order to set Claude's mind at rest. He communicated the intelligence to him immediately through the Marquis De Ruigny, a zealous Protestant nobleman. Claude, however, persisted in declining the meeting.

Disappointed in his endeavor to bring about a second conference, Bossuet gave more publicity to his narrative of that which had already taken place, and availed himself of the opportunity furnished by the Reflections he was called upon to make, in reference to Claude's account and manuscript answer, to re-

sume questions that had been treated at the conference, and to elucidate and confirm what he had there advanced.

The Conference and the Reflections were published at Paris in the spring of 1682.

An English version was printed in London five years after, the only one that has hitherto appeared. Generally uncouth in its wording, often obscure, and sometimes incorrect, it required emendation of some sort in almost every line before it could be republished by the Catholic Institute. That emendation it has now received, and the work as at present issued will, upon comparison with its predecessor, be found to be almost a new translation. Most of the passages from the fathers cited or alluded to in the text have been given in the original language from the best editions, for the convenience of some readers; and for the benefit of others, to whom some elucidations might appear wanting, a few historical illustrations have been subjoined in an appendix.

MICHAELMAS DAY, 1841.

* * * The reader will bear in mind that, in the following pages, the designation "Reformed" is synonymous with "French Calvinists." The name was assumed by those religionists to distinguish themselves not only from Catholics, but from the rest of Protestants.

PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

I HAD no intention to publish either this Conference or the instructions it was accompanied with. They both had for their object the conversion of a particular person ; and as they had their effect, there was no need of making more ado about them. But as I was not ambitious to publish the recital of it, so neither did I affectedly strive to keep it concealed. I gave a copy to Mademoiselle De Duras, who requested it : as was but just. I consented without difficulty to its being communicated to some gentlemen of the so-called reformed religion that desired to see it, because it was thought it might be serviceable to their instruction. The same motive induced me to communicate it to some more of those gentlemen, either by myself or by the intervention of friends. Thus it passed into several hands. Copies were taken without my being aware ; they were circulated, they were altered : some abridged the relation I had made, or turned it according to their own humor : in fine, it was printed at Toulouse from an incorrect copy, and I can no longer forbear giving it as I myself set it down, with great fidelity and scrupulous care.

Upon quitting the conference I related it entirely to the Duke and Duchess of Richelieu, in the presence of the Abbé Testu. The particular zeal they had for the conversion of Mademoiselle De Duras made them desire me so to do. I had before rehearsed to them the conversations which preceded it. Next day I made the same recital to some of my particular friends, amongst whom was the bishop of Mirepoix. I was full of the matter, and related it naturally. All these gentlemen exhorted me to commit it to writing whilst it was fresh in my memory, alleging several reasons to persuade me that this labor would not be lost. I believed them. I was seen to write with the expedition which is usual when one sets down facts that are before the mind, without troubling oneself about style ; and these

gentlemen observed in the written narrative the same simplicity they had discerned in my account of it by word of mouth. Mademoiselle De Duras acknowledged my report to be exactly true, and I hope those that shall read it without prejudice will have the same opinion of it.

My narrative having been circulated, as I have stated, one fell into the hands of M. Claude, as himself avers ; and he on his side circulated, together with an Answer to the Instructions I had particularly given Mademoiselle De Duras, a relation of the conference very different from this of mine. To speak freely what I think, his relation does credit to neither of us. We there interchange discourse that is very languid, very prolix, and very desultory. We often return to the point we started from, without its being apparent what has brought us back. We did not act in that manner, and our dispute was consecutive and close enough. In this sort of contests men naturally warm as in a kind of wrestling, and thus the sequel is more animated than the beginning. Men try one another, so to speak, in the first blows they interchange ; when they have a little explained themselves, when they think they have discovered where each party places the difficulty, and found, as I may say, the weak side, there is more animation and urgency in what ensues. Whether all this be as natural in M. Claude's discourse as in mine, the reader shall judge ; from the way that his is turned, many will scarce believe but that it has been at least adjusted and modified by the perusal of mine. But I will not dwell upon these reflections. It is with discourses as with pictures ; every one cannot discern what is original, and, so to speak, from the first hand. Nor will I here make use of the odious reproach of insincerity. One does not always so exactly remember either the things that were said, or the order in which they were delivered. We often confound in our minds our after thoughts with what we really said in the dispute ; and it comes to pass that, without any intention to deceive, we alter the truth. What I shall say of M. Claude, the same he may say of me. Our conversation was in private, and neither of us can produce indifferent witnesses ; thus every one will judge of the truth of our recitals according to his prepossessions. I pretend not to draw any advantage from the success of the conference, which was followed by the conversion of Mademoiselle De Duras ; it is God's work, for which we ought to give him thanks ; it is an example for those that are well disposed, but not an argument for the obstinate. Catholics will look on this change in one manner, and the "Reformed" in another. So that, should M. Claude and I set ourselves each of

us to justify his own account, the result would only be a dispute with which the public has nothing to do. And what great matter is it, the reader will say, which of the two had the better? The cause resides not in these two men, who would appear extremely vain, and so of little credit, if they would have every one, whether friend or adversary, believe them equally on their word. In these altercations the best course the prudent reader can take is to apply himself to the vital point; and leaving the personal facts out of sight, to consider the doctrine laid down by each party.

The subject treated of throughout this relation is no less clear than important. It is the authority of the Church. Our adversaries make little account of this dispute, being always heard to say that we must come to the main point, and leave aside as an unnecessary formality all the presumptions drawn from the authority of the Church: as if it were not essentially the main point to examine by what authority and what means Jesus Christ would have Christians resolve themselves on the disputes that should spring up in his Church. Catholics hold that this means is to hear the Church itself. They hold that a particular member ought not to resolve but with the whole body, and that he hazards all when he resolves any other way. They hold that, to know in what Church we ought to abide, we need only know which it is that can never be accused of having originated in separation; that is found existing before any separation; that from which all others have separated. Without leaving our house, our very parents will show us this Church. "Ask thy father and he will declare to thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."* According to this rule, whoever can show a whole Church, a whole society of pastors and people, the beginning of its being, and any time during which it was not, has at once convicted it of not being a Church truly Christian. This is our pretension; and we do not deem that this question regards a mere formality. We maintain that it concerns a fundamental article contained in these words of the creed, "I believe the Holy Catholic Church," an article, besides, of such importance, that it carries with it the decision of all the rest. But as this point is decisive, so it is clear; and it cannot be long spoken of but one side or other will show its weakness. To speak more correctly, when the least instructed Catholic engages with a Protestant on this point, the Protestant, how able or subtle soever, will find himself reduced, not always indeed to silence, but what is no less strong than silence to the

* Deut xxxii. 7.

utterance, when he shall attempt to speak, of manifest absurdities.

This was the case here with M. Claude, purely through the defect of his cause; for it will appear that he defended it with all possible skill, and with such subtlety, that I feared for those that heard him; for I know what St. Paul writes concerning such discourses. But, after all, we must boldly say, Truth gained a manifest victory. M. Claude's admissions ruin his cause. The instances where he remained without an answer are indeed such as allowed of none.

And to the end it may not be said I assert what I please, or that I now desire what I erewhile disclaimed—to be believed on my own word,—two things will show, whatever opinion may be had of me, that on this point I must necessarily be believed.

The *first* is, that, relying on the force of truth, and the promise of Him who said “I will give you a mouth and wisdom which your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay,”* wherever M. Claude shall say that he did not acknowledge what I make him acknowledge in the recital of the conference, I engage myself in a second conference to draw again from him the same acknowledgment; and wherever he shall say that he was not without an answer, I will, without any other argument than such as he has heard already, force him to answers so manifestly absurd, that every man of good sense shall acknowledge that to have been silent would have been better than to have made use of them. And lest it should be said (for in an affair that concerns the salvation of souls, we must, as much as may be, obviate every objection), lest then, once more, it should be said that M. Claude became involved in these embarrassments by some untoward lapse, I, on the contrary, affirm that this advantage is so inherent to our cause, that there is no minister, no doctor, no man living, but must in the same manner sink under the like arguments. Whosoever will make trial of it, will see that this is no idle promise. And should it be alleged that I presume too much on my strength, now that I examine myself in the presence of God, if such a presumption had made me speak, I would disown all I have said. Instead of promising myself any advantage, I should esteem myself already vanquished by trusting only to my own arm and my own weapons, and far from defying the strong, as David did,† I should rank myself among those of whom the same David sings, “that the arrows of children have pierced them, and their own

* Luke xxi. 15.

† 1 Kings (Sam.) xviii. 45.

tongues, too weak to defend them, are in fine turned against themselves.”*

The instruction which I offer to the “Reformed” generally, I particularly offer to those of the diocese of Meaux, whom, above all the rest, it is my duty to have a care for. To those that shall refuse this Christian instruction, no less peaceable, fraternal and paternal, than conclusive and decisive, I will say, in the words of St. Paul, with sorrow and groaning, there being no comfort for the loss of one’s children and brethren, I am clear from the blood of them all.†

This is the first thing that will show that I impute nothing to M. Claude in order to give myself any advantage. The *second* is, that M. Claude himself, in the midst of what he alleges against me, and throughout all the turns he gives our dispute, still acknowledges in substance what was at issue between us, or else shifts it off in such a manner as plainly shows that he cannot entirely disown it. But this will be better understood upon reading, after the instructions and the conference, the reflections I make on M. Claude’s treatise.

Some attention is requisite to follow the whole train of these instructions; for, whatever facility it has pleased God to allow us in a matter in which he discloses to the most ignorant as well as to the most learned the way of salvation, yet he would not discharge any one of the attention he is capable of; and since the following discourses have their rise from the nineteenth and twentieth articles of my Exposition, the reading of these two articles,‡ which will but take up half a quarter of an hour, will facilitate the understanding of all this work, though I hope, however, that it is of itself sufficiently intelligible.

Besides, the reading of them will not be unuseful to Catholics, who, ordinarily, give too little attention to books of controversy. Grounded in the faith of the Church, they are not sufficiently careful to study works by which their faith would be confirmed, and in which they would find means of reclaiming those that err. It was not so in the first ages of the Church: the treatises of controversy written by the fathers were sought after by all the faithful. Conversation being one of the means proposed to us by the Holy Ghost of gaining unbelievers and bringing back the erring, every one endeavored to render his profitable and edifying by such reading. The truth insinuated itself by so gentle a means, and conversation won those whom a premeditated dispute would perhaps but have irritated. But

* Ps. lxxiii. 8, 9.

† Acts xx. 26.

‡ Page 208, Baltimore edit. 18mo.

to the end our controversial works may be read as those of the fathers were, let us endeavor to fill them, as the fathers did, not only with exact and sound doctrine, but also with piety and charity ; and let us, as much as we can, correct the dryness, not to say the sourness, which is too often found in such books.

CONFERENCE
WITH
M. CLAUDE,
Minister of Charenton,
CONCERNING THE
AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

SECTION I.

Preparation for the conference and particular instruction.

MADemoiselle DE DURAS, being in some doubt about her religion, caused me to be asked by several persons of rank whether I were willing to confer with M. Claude in her presence? I answered that I would most willingly do so if I saw that such a conference was necessary for her salvation. She afterwards, through the medium of the Duke of Richelieu, invited me to come to Paris on Tuesday, the last day of February, 1678, and to enter into conference the next day with this minister on the point that she would specify to me. It was for the purpose of specifying it that she wished to see me before the conference. Having called on her on the day appointed, she acquainted me that the point she desired to have discussed with her minister was that of Church Authority, which seemed to her to include the whole controversy. She appeared to me not likely to come to a resolution without this conference, so that I judged it absolutely necessary.

I told her she had indeed good reason to lay the principal, and indeed the whole stress on this article, which, in fact, involved the decision of all the rest, as she herself had observed; and I took occasion to impress her yet more deeply with the importance of the question. It is, I observed, an ordinary boast

of your ministers that they cannot be denied to admit the fundamentals of belief. They say that we believe all they believe, but that they believe not all we believe. Their meaning in this is, that they have kept all the fundamentals of faith, and rejected only what we have added to them. They draw thence a great advantage, and pretend that their doctrine is secure and indisputable. Mademoiselle De Duras remembered very well having often heard them speak to this effect. I will make, proceeded I, but one remark upon this, which is,—that, far from conceding that they believe all the fundamentals of faith, we show that there is one article of the creed they do not believe, which is that of the universal Church. It is true they orally profess, “I believe the Catholic (or universal) Church,” as Arians, Macedonians, and Socinians say with the mouth, “I believe in Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost.” But as we are warranted in charging *them* with not believing these articles, because they believe them not as they ought, nor according to their true sense, so if we show the “Reformed” that they believe not as they ought the article of the Catholic Church, we may truly say that they, in fact, reject an important article of the creed.

Mademoiselle De Duras had read my treatise of the Exposition of Catholic Faith. She told me she remembered having seen something in it like to what I now said ; but I answered that in that treatise my intention had been to treat matters very briefly, and that it was fit that they should be stated to her somewhat more amply.

It must be borne in mind then, said I to her, what is meant by this expression, “Catholic or universal Church:” and in explanation, I began to lay for my ground that in the creed, which had for its object a simple declaration of the faith, this term must be taken in its most proper and most natural signification, and such as is most usual among Christians. Now all Christians by the name of Church understand a society professing to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern itself by his word. If this society makes this profession, it is consequently visible.

On the fact of this being the proper and natural signification of the word “Church,” of its being the import known by every one and used in common discourse, I desired no other witnesses than the Reformed themselves. When they speak of their Church prayers, of Church discipline, of the faith of the Church, of the pastors and doctors of the Church, they mean not the prayers of the predestinate, nor *their* discipline, nor *their* faith, but the prayers, faith, and discipline of all the faithful assem-

bled in the external society of God's people. When they say that a man edifies the Church, or that he scandalizes the Church, that they receive one into the Church, or exclude one out of the Church, all this is undoubtedly understood of the external society of God's people. Thus they explain it in the form of baptism when they say they are going to receive the child "into the fellowship of the Christian Church," and when, accordingly, they oblige the godfathers and godmothers "to instruct the little one in the doctrine received by God's people as it is," say they, "summarily comprised in the confession of faith which we all have;" and, again, when, in their Church prayers, they supplicate God "to deliver all his Churches from the jaws of ravening wolves." And yet more expressly in the confession of faith, article xxv., when they say "that the order of the Church which was established by Jesus Christ must be sacred, and therefore that the Church cannot subsist if there be not therein pastors having the charge to teach." And, in article xxvi., "that none ought to draw aside, but that all together ought to keep and maintain the unity of the Church, submitting to the common instruction." And, in fine, in article xxvii., "that we must carefully discern which is the true Church; and that it is the company of the faithful which agree to follow the word of God, and the pure religion thereon depending." Whence they conclude, article xxviii., "that where God's word is not received, nor any profession made of subjection thereunto, and where there is no use of the sacraments, one cannot, properly speaking, judge there is a Church." It is evident by all these passages, and by the common practice of the "Reformed," that the proper, natural, and generally used signification of the word Church is this—the external society of God's people, amongst whom though there be found some hypocrites and reprobates, "their malice," say they, "cannot efface the title of the Church," article xxviii. That is, hypocrites mixed in the external society of God's people cannot take from it the title of the true Church, provided it be vested with these exterior marks, "the profession of God's word, and the use of the sacraments," as is said in article xxviii. This is the acceptation of the word Church, when we speak simply, naturally, and properly, without wrangle or cavil; and if this be the ordinary acceptation of the word, we have reason to say that it was in this sense the apostles made use of it in their creed, where the most ordinary and simple style was to be adopted, the object being to embrace in few words the confession of the fundamentals of belief.

In fact, it has become usual in the common discourse of all

Christians to denote this external society of God's people by this word Church. When they mean to speak of the society of the predestinate, they express themselves accordingly, and say the Church of the predestinate: when by this word is meant the "Assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven," it is expressly named, as we see in St. Paul.* He here takes the word Church in a more unusual signification, for "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where is a company of many thousands of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect," that is, for heaven, where the holy souls are gathered together; and therefore he adds a word to mark out this Church:—it is "the Church of the first-born," who have preceded their brethren into glory. But when we use the word Church without any addition, the common practice of all Christians, not excepting the "Reformed" themselves, takes it to signify the assembly, the society, the communion of those that confess the true doctrine of Jesus Christ. And whence proceeds this custom of all Christians but from the Holy Scriptures?—where, in fact, we see the word Church taken commonly in this sense; so that this cannot be denied to be the ordinary and natural signification of the word. The word *ecclesia* (which we render Church) originally signifies an assembly, and was principally assigned to the assemblies heretofore held by the people for the discussing of public affairs. And the word is used in this sense in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, when the people of Ephesus gathered in fury against St. Paul—"The assembly (*ecclesia*) was confused." And again: "If ye inquire after any other matter, it may be decided in a lawful assembly" (*ecclesia*). And in fine: "When he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly" (*ecclesiam*).† This was the use of the word *ecclesia* (Church) amongst the Greeks and the heathens. The Jews and Christians afterwards made use of it to signify the assembly, the society, the community of God's people which professes to serve him. Every one is aware of that famous version of the Seventy, who translated the Old Testament into Greek some ages before the coming of Jesus Christ: out of above fifty passages where this word is found to be made use of in their translation, there is not any one in which it is otherwise taken than for some visible assembly, and very few in which it is not taken for the external society of God's people. In this sense also St. Stephen makes use of it when he says that "Moses was in the Church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him:"‡ call-

* Heb. xii. 34.

† Acts xix. 32, 39, 40.

‡ Acts vii. 33.

ing by this name, Church, according to the usage received amongst the Jews, the visible society of God's people. Christians took this word from the Jews, and kept it in the same sense, using it to signify the assembly of those that confessed Jesus Christ and made profession of his doctrine.

This is what is simply called the Church, or the Church of God and Jesus Christ; and out of more than a hundred passages where this word is made use of in the New Testament, there are scarce two or three where this signification is contested by the ministers; and even in the places where they do contest it, it is manifest they do so without reason. For example, they will not allow this text of St. Paul, where he says that Jesus Christ presented to himself a "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that should be holy and without blemish;"* this text, I say, they will not allow to be understood of the visible Church, nor even of the Church on earth, because the Church, so considered, far from being without blemish, stands in daily need of this prayer—"forgive us our sins." Now I say, on the contrary, that to affirm that this glorious and spotless Church is not the visible Church is manifestly to contradict the apostle. For see of what Church St. Paul speaks, it is of that "which Jesus Christ loved, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life."† This Church, washed in water and purified by baptism; this Church, sanctified by the word of life—whether that of preaching, or that which is made use of in the sacraments;—this Church is without doubt the visible Church. The holy society of the predestinate is not excluded from it: God forbid. They are the most noble part of it; but they are comprised in this aggregate. They are there instructed by the word, they are there purified by baptism; and often also some of the reprobate are employed in these ministrations. In this Scripture passage, therefore, the predestinate are to be regarded, not as making a body apart, but as constituting the fairest and most noble portion of this external society: it is this society which the apostle calls the Church. Jesus Christ without doubt loves it, for he has given it baptism; he shed his blood to gather it together; there is no one either called, or justified, or baptized, in this Church, who is not called, justified, and baptized in the name and by the merits of Jesus Christ. This Church is glorious, because she publicly glorifies God, because she declares to all the earth the glory of the gospel and cross of Jesus Christ. This

* Eph. v. 27

† Ibid.

Church is holy, because she ever steadily and invariably teaches the holy doctrine which continually brings forth saints in her unity. This Church has neither spot nor wrinkle, because she has neither error nor any evil maxim; and moreover because she instructs and holds in her bosom the elect of God; who, though sinners on earth, find in her communion external means to purify themselves, so that they shall one day come in a most perfect state before Jesus Christ.

This perhaps is the only passage in which it may with some show of probability be alleged that the word Church, taken simply, signifies any thing else than the external society of God's people: and yet you see how clear it is that it ought to be understood as the rest.

But should this passage, and two or three more, have a signification either doubtful, or even different from this, yet all the remainder are conformable to it. For what is there more frequent than such expressions as these,—that we are to edify the Church, that the Church has been persecuted, that God is praised in the midst of the Church, that she is saluted, that she is visited, that there are pastors and bishops established to govern her, and other like,* the number of which is infinite? It cannot then be denied that this is the ordinary signification of the word Church, and consequently that in which it was to be taken in so plain a confession of faith as is the apostles' creed. In this sense was it taken by a whole great council, the first and holiest of all the universal councils, when condemning Arius it pronounced in this manner, "The holy Catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes all those who say that the Son of God was drawn out of nothing."† It is Jesus Christ himself who taught us to believe the Church in this sense. For to found his Church he came forth from the invisible bosom of his Father, and made himself visible to men: he assembled about him a society of men that acknowledged him for their master. This is what he called his Church. To this primitive Church the faithful who afterwards believed aggregated themselves, and thence sprang the Church which the creed terms Catholic or universal. Jesus Christ used the word Church to signify this visible society, when he said himself we must hear the Church—"Tell the Church," and again when he said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."‡

* 1 Cor. x. 32; xv. 9; Heb. ii. 12, &c. † Conc. Nic., Labbe ii. 27. A.D. 325,

‡ Matt. xviii. 17; xvi. 18.

Why, said I, madam, why will not they of your religion understand here by the word Church, the society of those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ and the gospel, since it is certain that this society is in effect the true Church, against which hell could never prevail, neither when it instigated tyrants to persecute her nor when it hired false teachers to corrupt her? Hell will not prevail against the predestinate, it is certain; for if it cannot prevail against this external society, with much greater reason it will not prevail against the elect of God, who are the purest and most spiritual part of this Church. But by the same reason that it cannot prevail against the elect, it cannot prevail against the Church which teaches them, in which they confess the gospel and receive the sacraments. It is this external society, in which the elect serve God, that we ought to understand by the word Church, and at the same time admire the invincible force of Jesus Christ's promises, who has so invigorated the society of his people, though weak in comparison with the infidels that encompassed it without, though torn by heretics who divided it within, that there has been not so much as a single moment in which this Church has not been seen by the whole earth.

But the "Reformed" have not dared to retain this natural sense of the gospel; for, that they might establish themselves, they have been forced to say in their Confession of Faith, article xxxi., "That the state of the Church was interrupted, and that it was needful to raise it up anew, because it was in ruin and desolation." In fact, when their Church was set up, it entered not into communion with any other Church then existing on earth; but was formed by breaking with all the Christian Churches which were in the world. They have not then the consolation which Catholics have, of seeing Jesus Christ's promise visibly accomplished and maintained during so many ages. They cannot show a Church which has ever been since Jesus Christ came to build it on the rock; and, to save his word, they are obliged to have recourse to a Church of the predestinate, which neither themselves nor any one can show. Now Jesus Christ intended to exhibit something striking and clear when he said that his Church, despite the opposition of hell, should be always invincible; he would, I say, exhibit something clear and resplendent, which might serve, in all ages, for a sensible and palpable assurance of the immutable certainty of his promises. And, in fact, let us consider when he spoke this word: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,

and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* It was when, after asking his apostles, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter in the name of them all answered him, “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” Upon this illustrious confession of faith, which flesh and blood had not dictated, but the heavenly Father had revealed to Peter; upon this illustrious confession of faith, I say, are founded both St. Peter’s dignity and the Church’s immovable firmness. This Church, which confesses Jesus Christ to be the true Son of God, is that against which hell shall never prevail, and which shall subsist without interruption, despite all the efforts and artifices of the devil. It appears, then, clearly that the Church of which Jesus Christ speaks in this place is a confessing Church, a Church that publishes the faith, and consequently an external and visible Church. And mark what he adds: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.” Whatever is to be understood by these words, whether preaching or ecclesiastical censures, or the ministry of priests in the sacrament of penance as Catholics understand them, it is certain, at any rate, that here is an exterior ministry given to this Church. It is then this Church which confesses the faith, and confesses it principally by the mouth of St. Peter; it is this Church which uses the ministry of the keys; it is she that shall always be on earth, hell never being able to prevail against her.

And because Jesus Christ intended that she should always visibly subsist, he invested her with discernible marks which are always to continue; for see how he sends his apostles, and what he says to them at his ascending into heaven: “Go, ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the world;”† teaching with you, baptizing with you, instructing with you, my faithful, to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded; consequently, exercising with you in my Church an external ministry. It is with you, it is with those that shall succeed you, it is with the society assembled under their guidance that I shall be, from this present, even to the consummation of the world; always, without interruption, for there shall not be any one moment in which I will abandon

* Matt. xvi. 18.

† Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

you; and though absent in body, I will be always present by my Holy Spirit.

In consequence of this word, St. Paul also tells us that the ecclesiastical ministry shall last, without discontinuance, till the general resurrection: "He that descended is the same that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;"* that is to say, until we have attained the perfection of Jesus Christ, glorified in body and soul; this is the term which God has set to the ecclesiastical ministry.

The Reformed will not allow the visible Church to be that which is called Jesus Christ's body; what is then that body "where God has established some apostles, some prophets, and some pastors and teachers?" Which is that body where God has placed several members and different graces, "the grace of ministering, the grace of teaching, the grace of exhortation and consolation, the grace of ruling?"† Which, I say, is that body, if it be not the visible Church? But that which makes the Reformed unwilling to acknowledge that the body of Jesus Christ, so much recommended in the Scripture, can be the visible Church, is their being constrained to say that the visible church sometimes ceases to be on earth, and they recoil from asserting that Jesus Christ's body is not always, for fear of implying that Jesus Christ dieth again.

It is then, unquestionably, this assembly of pastors and people, it is this Church, composed of so many different members, by whom so many holy ministries are outwardly exercised; it is this that is called "Jesus Christ's body;" it was to this body, assembled under the ministry of pastors, that he said at his ascending into heaven, "Lo, I am with you, even unto the consummation of the world." He then that descended is the same that ascended, to the end he might fill all things; heaven by his person and his visible presence, earth by his spirit and his invisible assistance, both the one and the other by his truth and his word. And it was to continue (when ascending into heaven) this assistance promised to his Church, that he placed some apostles, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; an establishment which must last till the work of God

* Eph. iv. 10—13.

† Rom. xii. 4—8.

be entirely accomplished, until we be all perfect men, and till the whole body of the Church have attained to the fulness and perfection of Jesus Christ.

Thus Jesus Christ's work is everlasting on earth: the Church, founded on the confession of the faith, shall always abide, and always confess the faith; her ministry shall be everlasting; she shall bind and loose even to the end of the world, hell never being able to hinder her; she shall never discontinue the teaching of nations; the sacraments, that is, the exterior liveries with which she is clad, shall last for ever. "Teach and baptize nations, and I am with you always. As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shall show the death of the Lord until he come."* With the Lord's supper shall last the confession of the faith; the ecclesiastical ministry and the exterior and interior communion of the faithful amongst themselves and with Jesus Christ, until such time as Jesus Christ come: the duration of the Church and of the ecclesiastical ministry has no other limits.

It is then not barely the society of the predestinate that shall subsist for ever; it is the visible body in which the predestinate are included, which preaches to them, which teaches them, and which regenerates them by baptism, which nourishes them by the eucharist, which administers to them the keys, which governs and keeps them united under discipline, which forms Jesus Christ in them;—it is this visible body that shall subsist for ever. And for this reason it is that in the apostles' creed, where the grounds of the faith are proposed to our belief, we are at the same time taught to believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and to believe the holy Catholic Church, and the communion of saints—an inward communion by charity, and in the Holy Ghost who animates us, true; but at the same time also an outward communion in the sacraments, in the confession of faith, and in all the outward ministry of the Church.

And all that we have hitherto said is included in this form: I believe the universal Church. We believe her at all times: she then always subsists; we believe her at all times: she then always teaches the truth.

Your ministers contend that it is one thing to believe the Church, that is, to believe that she is, and another to give belief (or credence) to the Church, that is, to believe all her decisions; but this is a frivolous distinction. He who believes that the Church always is, believes that she always is confess-

* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

ing and teaching the truth. It is to the Church which confesses the truth that Jesus Christ promised hell should not prevail against her; the truth then shall never fail to be confessed in her; and, consequently, in believing that she is, we are assured she is always credible. In fact, the retaining some points of Jesus Christ's doctrine is not sufficient to preserve the name of Church; for then Arians, Pelagians, Donatists, Anabaptists, and Socinians would belong to the Church: they do not, however; God forbid we should ascribe the name of Church to such a Babel. The Church, then, must not only keep some truth, she must keep and teach all truth, else she is not the Church.

It is to no purpose to draw a distinction between fundamental articles and the rest. For all that God has revealed must be retained; he has revealed nothing to us that is not very important for our salvation. "I am the Lord, which teacheth thee profitable things."* In the faith, then, which the Church teaches must be found the fulness of divinely revealed truths; otherwise she is no longer the Church which Christ established. That individuals may be ignorant of some articles, I readily admit; but the Church conceals nothing of what Jesus Christ has revealed; and therefore the faithful, who are ignorant of certain articles in particular, confess them, nevertheless, all in general, when they say, I believe the universal Church.

Here, said I, is this Church which your ministers know not. They teach you that this visible and outward Church may cease to be upon earth; they teach you that she may err in her decisions; they teach you that to believe her is to believe men. But it is not in this manner that the Church is proposed to us in the creed; it is there proposed to us to believe her, as we believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; and therefore the believing of the Church is joined with the believing of the three divine persons.

These things having been said at intervals, but nearly in the order here set down, I added that our doctrine on this point was so true, that the "Reformed," who denied, had been unable totally to reject it. That is, that their synods act in such a manner as shows that they require, as well as we, an absolute submission to the authority of the Church and its decrees. Here I showed Mademoiselle De Duras the four acts of the Reformed religion, which I have taken notice of in the Exposition, article xx. She had read them there, but I made her read them in the very book of the "Discipline."

The first is taken out of the fifth chapter, title Consistories,

* Isaiah xlviii. 17.

article xxxi., where it is said "that disputes about doctrine should be determined by God's word, if so may be, in the consistory; if not, the matter should be brought before the Colloquy, thence before the Provincial Synod, and, in fine, before the national, where the full and final resolution should be made by God's word, to which, if any one refused to submit with an express disclaiming of his errors, he should be cut off from the Church." It is not then, said I, to God's word alone, precisely as such, that the full and final resolution belongs (since after its having been proposed an appeal is permitted), but to God's word, in as much as expounded and interpreted by the Church's final judgment.

The second act is taken out of the synod of Vitré, related in the book of the "Discipline." It contains the letter of mission which all the churches draw up when they send deputies to the national synod; it is as follows: "We promise before God to submit ourselves to whatsoever shall be resolved in your holy assembly, being persuaded that God will preside therein, and guide you by his Holy Spirit in all truth and equity by the rule of his word." This persuasion, said I, if it be grounded only on a human presumption, cannot be the matter of so solemn an oath by which they swear to submit to a resolution as yet unknown. It cannot then be founded but on an express promise that the Holy Ghost will preside in the final judgment of the Church; and Catholics say no more.

The third act, which is found in the same book of the "Discipline," is the condemnation of the Independents, for saying "that every Church ought to govern itself without dependence on any one in ecclesiastical matters." This proposition was, at the synod of Charenton, declared "as prejudicial to the state as to the Church." It was there judged "that it opened the door to all sort of irregularities and extravagances, took away all remedies, and made way for the forming as many religions as parishes." But, said I, whatever synods are held, if we do not believe ourselves obliged to submit our judgment to them, we cannot avoid the evils denounced in the Independents, and we leave a door open for the setting up as many religions, I do not say as there are parishes, but as there are heads. We are then necessarily brought to this obligation of submitting our judgment to what the Catholic Church teaches.

These three acts are taken out of the book of the Discipline, printed at Charenton in the year 1667.

The fourth is found in a book of M. Blondel, entitled "*Actes Authentiques*," printed at Amsterdam, by Blaeu, in the year 1655. It is a resolution of the national synod of Sainte Foy,

in 1578, appointing four ministers to attend a convention, which had for its object to deliberate upon a union with the Lutherans, to be effected by drawing up a *profession of faith* which was to be used by all. These ministers are empowered "to decide all doctrinal and other points that may be discussed, and to subscribe to the *profession* without any further consultation of the Churches, if time did not permit them to do so." From this act I infer two things: 1st, that the entire synod commit their faith to four individuals, which is certainly much more extraordinary than that an individual should submit to the whole Church; 2d, that the Reformed Church is as yet very doubtful of its confession of faith, since it consents that changes should be made in it, even on such important points as are controverted between them and the Lutherans, and one of which is the real presence. If the Reformed expected the Lutherans to adopt their creed, they had no need of making a new profession of faith. The parties therefore must have supposed that, while both adhered to their respective opinions, a *confession* would be drawn up to which they would both subscribe; this however could not be effected without adding or suppressing some essential point of the Profession of Faith already taught and used as containing *only the pure word of God*.

Mademoiselle De Duras acknowledged that, having read in my treatise these acts and the reflections I made upon them (the same that I had just offered), she knew not how to answer the objections that occurred to her mind, and that for this reason she wished to know what reply would be made by M. Claude, in relation to these acts and other difficulties regarding the authority of the Church.

I observed to her that, although the members of her persuasion acted as if they admitted the authority of the Church to be infallible and incontestible, they however denied this infallibility; and I added that it was a uniform maxim of her religion, that any individual, no matter how ignorant he may be, was obliged to believe that he could understand the holy Scripture better than all councils and all the rest of the Church besides. She appeared to be struck with this proposition; but I moreover observed that they who professed her religion believed something still more extraordinary, viz., that there is a moment when a Christian is under the necessity of doubting whether the Scripture is the inspired word of God; whether the gospel is true or fabulous; whether Jesus Christ is an impostor or entitled to belief. As she seemed to be still more astonished at this remark, I assured her that this proposition as well as the other was a necessary consequence of the doctrine which her

persuasion held on the authority of the Church, and that I had no doubt of being able to compel M. Claude to admit them.

I made known to her the reasons of what I had said, and at the same time explained to her that the character of heterodoxy observable among the Reformed was this, that while they denied the obligation of submitting, without examination, to the decisions of the Church, they were forced, for the purpose of maintaining order among themselves, to invest the Church with the very authority which they denied to it.

She observed to me that she understood my reasoning, and remembered to have read it before ; but that, although she did not see how it could be answered, she found it difficult to believe that no reply could be made to it.

The Countess De Roye at this moment announced to us that M. Claude, who had promised to meet me on the following day, had been forbidden to do so, and could not comply with his engagement. Mad. De Duras, upon hearing this news, expressed great dissatisfaction. For my part, I wished to retire, and to leave her with her sister ; but she prevailed upon me to repeat the remarks which I had made to her, which I did in a few words, and answered some objections that were advanced.

On the following morning Mad. De Duras paid me a visit, in the company of Mr. Coton, a gentleman of her own persuasion and with whom I was acquainted. It was he who at her request had engaged M. Claude for the discussion, and who had notified her of his willingness and promise to meet me on that occasion. She then requested me to repeat what I had said the evening before. I did so, and Mr. Coton admitted that he knew not what to answer, and was very desirous to hear what M. Claude had to say upon the subject. He and Mad. De Duras started some objections drawn from the frequent prevarications of the people of Israel, who had so often forsaken God, and by whose idolatry the public worship was so far abolished that the prophet Elias thought himself to be the only servant of the true God, until he learned from the Almighty himself that there were "seven thousand men in Israel whose knees had not been bowed before Baal." 3 Kings xix.

My reply was, that in the case of Elias there could be no difficulty, since it was plain, from the very words of the passage which they quoted, that only the territory of Israel, where Elias prophesied, was thus spoken of ; and that the divine worship was so far at that time from being extinct in Juda, that it was there, under the reign of Josaphat, in the greatest lustre it had been since Solomon's time. The thing passed for manifest ; and I observed only how little sincerity there was in

the ministers' continuing to allege this passage, after Cardinal Du Perron had given it so decisive an answer. As to what happened in Juda itself, I would yet make the objection stronger than they had proposed it, by considering the state of God's people under Achaz,* who shut up the temple, caused Urias, the priest of the Lord, to sacrifice to idols, and filled all Jerusalem with abominations: and afterwards under Manasses,† whose impieties went beyond those of Achaz: but to show that all these facts were irrelevant to the question, I desired them only to observe that Isaiah, who lived during all the reign of Achaz, notwithstanding all these abominations of the king, of the priest Urias, and almost all the people, never separated from the communion of Juda, no more than did the rest of the prophets who lived at the same time and at various other periods: a fact which shows that there is always a people of God, from whose communion it is never lawful to separate. It is written also‡ that, in the days of Manasses, God spake by the mouth of all his prophets, and threatened this impious king and all the people. But these prophets, who reprehended and detested the impieties of this people, separated not from the communion.

And, to understand matters thoroughly, we must, said I, consider the constitution of the ancient people. The ancient people had this peculiar to itself, that it was multiplied by carnal generation, by which as well the national as the priestly succession was kept up; that this people bore in their flesh the mark of the covenant, to wit, circumcision, which we do not read to have ever been discontinued; and so, though the priests and almost all the people should have prevaricated, the state of God's people subsisted always in its exterior form, whether they would or not. Nor could any interruption take place in the priesthood, which God had settled in the family of Aaron. But it is not so with the new people, whose outward form consists in nothing else save the profession of Jesus Christ's doctrine; so that if the confession of the true faith should be extinct for only one moment, the Church, which has no succession but by the continuance of this profession, would be wholly extinct, without any possibility of ever reviving either in its people or pastors but by a new mission.

I added, besides, that I would not say that the true faith and true worship of God had been wholly abolished in the people of Israel, so that God had no more any true servants on earth.

* 4 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii.

† 4 Kings xxi.

‡ 4 Kings xxi. 10.

On the contrary, I found, first, that it was clear that, notwithstanding the corruption, God still reserved to himself a sufficient number of servants who had no share in idolatry. For if it was so in Israel (which was schismatical and separated from God's people), as God himself declared to Elias, it must with far greater reason have been so in Juda, which God had reserved to himself, for the perpetuating of his people and kingdom till the time of the Messiah. When, therefore, declaring that the king and all the people had forsaken God's law, the Scripture must be understood to speak not of all the people without exception, but of a great part, and perhaps of the greatest part; which the ministers did not deny: secondly, it must not be imagined that God's servants and the true faith were preserved only in secret; we should rather say that throughout the whole of the ancient people's history, the true doctrine had always been conspicuous; for there was always a continued succession of prophets, who, instead of adhering to or conniving at the people's errors, vigorously denounced them; and this succession was so unintermitted that the Holy Ghost hesitates not to say,* "that God rose up night and morning, and daily admonished the people by the mouth of his prophets;" the most forcible expression that can be imagined to show that the true faith was never so much as one moment without publication, nor the people without warning. And for evidence that it was so we have just seen how, during the whole reign of Achaz, Isaiah ceased not to prophesy; and under Manasses, when wickedness seems to have reached its climax, since neither the penitence of that king, nor the holiness of his grandson Josia, could revoke the sentence passed upon this people, God always remembering the abominations of Manasses; in this time, I say, we have seen that God made his prophets speak, and that a great part of the people publicly followed them appears in the fact that this impious prince "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood,"† a certain sign that he found a great resistance to his idolatries. It is even said that he caused Isaiah to be put to death, as his predecessors had done the other prophets who reprehended them; and this saying is preserved in ancient tradition, conformable to the word of our Lord, who upbraids the Jews with "killing the prophets,"‡ and to the discourse of St. Stephen, who says that there was no prophet whom they did not persecute.§ These prophets made a part of God's people; these prophets kept a

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15; Jer. xi. 7; xxv. 3, 4.

† Matt. xxiii. 31, 37.

‡ 4 Kings xxi. 16.

§ Acts vii. 52.

considerable part of the priests and people to their duty ; these prophets, who confirmed their mission by visible miracles, hindered the corruption from becoming universal ; and whilst a frightful multitude, and perhaps the great bulk of the synagogue, were drawn into idolatry, they kept the tradition of the truth in the people of Israel.

Ezekiel, who appeared a little after, shows it when he speaks " of the priests, the Levites, the sons of Sadok that kept the charge of the sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray ;" they, proceeds he, " shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God."* This succession—not only of the flesh, but also of the faith and the ministry—had been maintained in these priests and Levites, whom God's grace and the prophets' preaching had kept to their duty. And it is to be observed that God never made this ministry of the prophets more conspicuous than when impiety seemed to have gained the upper hand ; so that in times when the ordinary means of instructing the people was (not destroyed but) obscured, God prepared extraordinary and miraculous means.

To this may be added that this extraordinary means, to wit, the prophetic ministry, was, before the captivity, in a manner ordinary with God's people, where the prophets constituted, as it were, a permanently standing class, whence God continually drew divine men, by whose mouth he spake loudly and publicly to all his people.

Between the return from captivity and the coming of Jesus Christ there was no more any public and lasting idolatry. We know what happened under Antiochus Epiphanes ; but we know also the zeal of Mathathias and the great number of true believers that joined his house,† and the splendid victories of Judas Machabeus and his brethren : under them and their successors, the profession of the true faith continued till Jesus Christ. At last the Pharisees infected the religion and worship with many superstitions. As the corruption was about to prevail Jesus Christ appeared in the world.

Until his coming, religion had been preserved ; the doctors of the law had many pernicious maxims and practices, which gradually crept in and gained ground ; they became common, but they were not become dogmas of the synagogue. Wherefore Jesus Christ still said, " The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' chair : all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but after their works do ye not."‡

* Ezech. xliv. 15.

† 1 Mach. ii.

‡ Matt. xxiii.

He ceased not to honor the ministry of the priests; he sent the lepers to them according to the direction of the law. He frequented the temple; and, whilst reproving abuses, continued always joined to the communion of God's people and the order of the public ministry.

At length came the time of the fall and reprobation of the ancient people, foretold by the Scriptures and prophets, when the synagogue condemned Jesus Christ and his doctrine. But then Jesus Christ had appeared; he had begun in the bosom of the synagogue to gather his Church, which was to subsist for ever. It is then manifest, *first*, that there was always a visible body of God's people, continued by an uninterrupted succession, from the communion of which society it was never lawful to separate; *secondly*, always a succession of high priests, and priests descended from Aaron, and Levites issued from Levi, so that there was never any need of God's raising up people in an extraordinary manner; *thirdly*, it is no less evident that the true faith has always been publicly declared, and that no one moment can be assigned in which the profession of it has not been as clear as the light of the sun, a thing which shows how much they are deceived who believe that, to keep up the outward state of the Church, it is sufficient that one can name from time to time pretended teachers of the truth. For if there be any time when the profession of faith has ceased in the Church, her condition is so much worse than that of the synagogue, as she from that moment loses the succession, as I erewhile said.

After these observations on my side, some time was spent in passing them over again; and in the meantime the Countess De Roye came to tell us that M. Claude consented to the conference, which, if I pleased, should be at her house about three o'clock.

SECTION II.

The Conference.

I WENT to the Countess of Roze's house, where I met M. Claude. We began by mutual civilities, and he on his part testified great respect. After this I entered upon the subject by asking for an explanation of the four acts, transcribed in my book, and mentioned above. Having in few words stated the difficulty as it is proposed in the Exposition, and as I had laid it open to Mademoiselle De Duras, I added that M. Claude ought to be the more prepared to answer it, as what I said was not at all new to him, since in all appearance the treatise of the Exposition had fallen into his hands, and that, in a discussion like the present, it was a great satisfaction to be assured there would be no surprise.

M. Claude took up the discourse, and, having reiterated all the former civilities in terms yet more obliging, he at once declared that all I had objected from their "Discipline" and synods in my treatise, and also at present, was very faithfully related without any alteration of the words. With regard to the sense, however, he begged to inform me that though there were, as I had observed, divers degrees established in their Discipline, the force of the decision was to be wholly referred to God's word alone. As to what I objected, that God's word had been proposed in the consistory, from which one might appeal; whence it followed, according to my inference, that the final decision, from which there was no more appeal, belonged to God's word, not taken in itself, but in as much as declared by the final judgment of the Church;—such was not their intent: for they held that the decision wholly appertained to the pure word of God, which the Church in her assemblies, first and last, did but show and point to; but these divers degrees had been established to give those who erred leisure to bethink themselves. That, accordingly, excommunication was not resorted to in the first instance, the consistory hoping that a greater assembly, like the colloquy, and afterwards the provincial synod, composed of a greater number of persons, perhaps more respected, or at any rate less suspected, by the gainsayer, would dispose him to hear the truth; that the colloquy

and the provincial synod used like moderation on the same motive of charity ; but that after the national synod had spoken, as it was the last human remedy, all hope was at an end, and that they proceeded then to the final sentence, making use of excommunication as the last effort of ecclesiastical power. That it was not thence to be concluded that the national synod held itself any more infallible than the preceding assemblies, but only that, after all had been tried, the ultimate resource was adopted.

That, as to the promise made prior to the national synod, it was founded only on the hope entertained that the assembly would follow the word of God, and that the Holy Ghost would preside in it, which did not signify a perfect assurance ; and, besides, that the form " being persuaded " was a courteous manner of expressing a condition, without weakening the reverence for so great an assembly, or the favorable presumption to be held in regard of their proceedings.

As to the condemnation of the Independents, he prayed me to observe that, touching the authority of the Church and her assemblies, there was something in which those of his religion agreed with us, and something in which they agreed with the Independents : with us, that ecclesiastical assemblies are necessary and useful, and that some subordination must be established : with the Independents, that these assemblies, how numerous soever, are not therefore infallible. That, accordingly, they were obliged to condemn the Independents, who denied not only the infallibility, but also the utility and necessity of these assemblies and of this subordination. " It is in this," said he, " that Independency consists." He added, that to maintain it was, indeed, to overthrow order, and make way for as many religions as there were parishes ; because by so doing every means of agreeing was taken away. Hence he concluded that, although it was a settled point amongst them that ecclesiastical assemblies were not infallible means, yet their being useful means afforded sufficient reasons for maintaining them, and condemning the Independents.

" As to the synod of Sainte Foy, the object in view was either to render the Lutherans more tractable, by drawing them," said he, " nearer to ourselves, or at any rate to establish a mutual toleration ; which entailed no necessity of any suppression or addition in the Confession of Faith, this being held for unalterable ; and that, besides, although full power had been given to four ministers, yet I well knew that such acts were subject to ratification, in case the proxies went beyond their instructions : witness the ratifications necessary in treaties

agreed to by the plenipotentiaries of princes, and other like examples, in which there is always a condition of obtaining the prince's ratification—a condition which, without being expressed, is naturally included in such commissions."

Having spoken to this effect at some length, and in very lucid and orderly style, he added that he believed me, equitable as I was, ready to acknowledge that, as in things in which I should have to explain to him our tenets and our councils,—that of Trent, for instance,—it would be fit he should acquiesce in my representation of them, so it was just I should rest satisfied with his explanation of the articles of their discipline and the tenets of their party; it being certain that there was no other amongst them but what he had now declared to me.

I replied, in reference to this concluding suggestion, that what he said would be true, did the question turn merely on explanation of their rites, if this word might be used, and the manner of their administering the word or sacraments, or holding of synods; that in this I should take his word, as being better informed; but that here I maintained they had shared the fate of all who are in error, falling into contradiction, and being forced to set up what they had denied. That I was aware they denied any obligation of submitting to the Church's judgment without examining it; but that, at the same time, I considered this infallibility of the Church to be so necessary, that even those who deny it in speculation could not forbear establishing it in practice if they would keep any order amongst them. Further, that if his purpose were to show any contradiction in the tenets of the Catholic Church, I should not pretend to oblige him to receive the explication I should give him of her tenets and her councils, and that it would then be free for him to draw from their words such inference as he pleased, and I thought he would not refuse me as much: to which he consented without difficulty.

I had no design to insist much on the synod of Sainte Foy, which would, I thought, carry me too far from the two propositions, the acknowledgment of which I aimed to draw from him; I only therefore answered that I yielded to the reason he alleged concerning the necessity of a ratification, though in matters of faith such powers and trusts were a little extraordinary: and, besides, I was willing to believe that the synod had not intended the deputies should overturn all. But that which struck me, and what he seemed not to have answered, was that the synod had doubted of their confession of faith, since they permitted the making of another, and I saw not how this agreed

with what they further told us, that this confession contained nothing but the pure word of God, in which every one knows there is nothing to be changed. As to his observation, that their aim was only to reduce the Lutherans to more equitable sentiments, or at all events to settle a mutual toleration, two things gainsayed it: *first*, that there was mention of a power to decide all points of doctrine, which manifestly concerned the real presence, a point the Lutherans would never give up; *second*, that to settle a mutual toleration there was no need of framing a confession of common faith, but only of establishing this toleration by a synodal decree, as was done at Charenton.

M. Claude answered that the point of doctrine to be decided was, whether a mutual toleration might be established, and that the confession of common faith would have done no more than declare this toleration. That this might be done in a synod he would not deny, as I must grant that it might also be done in a confession of faith, which would have an express article to that purpose.

I answered him that this could never be called a confession of faith; and I asked him whether he thought the Lutherans or the Calvinists should have retrenched any thing of what the one said for the real presence, and the other against it. He answered "No;" and then, said I, each party would abide by terms of its own confession of faith, having nothing in common but the article of toleration. There were, he observed, many other points whereon we agreed. Granted, said I; but it was not about these points the accord was to be made; the question was about the real presence, and some others on which it was impossible to draw up a confession of common faith, except one of the parties changed, or both agreed upon ambiguous expressions, which each might draw to its own opinions, a thing that had been often attempted, as M. Claude himself would readily own. He granted it, and even instanced the Assembly of Marbourg, and some others held for that purpose; I concluded then that I was warranted in believing that the Synod of Sainte Foy had a like design, and that it would have been to mock the world to call that a confession of common faith which should have exhibited such manifest contradictions on such important doctrinal points. I further added, it was the more certain that a confession of faith was, as I said, the object contemplated, because the Lutherans having already several times declared against toleration, nothing was to be expected from them but by the means of which I spoke. The matter rested there, and I only said that every one need but

consider what he ought to think in his conscience of a confession of faith which a whole national synod had consented to change.

M. Claude having observed that the oath of submitting to the national synod included a condition, I interrupted him by putting in a word. "Yes," said I, "they hoped well of the synod, yet without certainty; and, pending the issue, they engaged by oath to submit." M. Claude telling me here that I interrupted him, and praying me to allow him to conclude, I held my peace. But after the affair of Sainte Foy was discussed, I observed to him that I thought it necessary, before passing any further, I should state in a few words what I had conceived of his doctrine, to the end we might not speak in the air. I said to him then, "You say, sir, that these words, 'Being persuaded that God will preside in it, and guide you by his Holy Spirit in all truth and equity through the rule of his word,' are only a courteous manner of proposing a condition." He agreed to it. "Let us then," said I, "reduce the proposition to a conditional one, and we shall see its meaning. I swear to submit to all you shall decide, on this supposition or condition, that what you shall decide be agreeable to God's word. Such an oath is nothing else but a manifest illusion, as signifying nothing; I might take the same to M. Claude, or he to me. But in this there would be nothing serious; and as a proof that something special is intended, observe that this oath is made only to the synod, which gives the final determination, although, in M. Claude's sense, there were as much reason to make it to the consistory, to which they ought to submit, as well as to the synod, supposing it has the word of God as its guide."

Here I paused for a while; and finding that nothing was said in reply, I resumed as follows:—"Then, after all, sir, if I well understand your doctrine, you believe that a private person may doubt of the Church's judgment even when she gives her final determination." "No, sir," M. Claude answered: "it is not to be said that one may doubt; there being all the likelihood in the world that the Church will judge aright." "He that says likelihood, sir," replied I immediately, "says a manifest doubt." "But," said M. Claude, "there is more: for Jesus Christ promised that all those who should seek would find; and since it is to be presumed they will seek well, it is to be also believed they will judge well, and in this assurance there is something indubitable. But upon witnessing cabals, factions, and different interests at work in councils, it may rea-

sonably be doubted whether in such an assembly there will not be mixed something human and doubtful."

"Pray, sir," said I, "let us leave aside what is good for nothing but to throw dust into one's eyes. All you say of cabals, factions, interests, is absolutely foreign to the purpose, and consequently serves only to perplex."

"There is nothing," said M. Claude, "less foreign to the purpose."

"And I maintain," said I, "that yourself will shortly concede that there is nothing more foreign to the purpose. For I ask you, sir, supposing there should appear in the council neither factions nor cabals; supposing also one were assured that there were none, and that all proceeded in an orderly manner; must one receive the decision without examining it?" He was fain to answer "No." Whence I immediately concluded: "I was right, then, in saying that all you alleged as very considerable, about factions and cabals, is in reality but a diversion; and, in fine, that a private person, a woman, an ignorant man, any one, may believe and ought to believe that possibly he may understand the word of God better than a whole council, though assembled from the four quarters of the world, and than all the rest of the Church."

"Yes," said he, "it is so."

I repeated twice or thrice the proposition he had granted, adding still some stranger circumstance, but evidently contained in what was accorded. "What!" said I, "better than all the rest of the Church together, and than all her assemblies, though composed of the holiest and most enlightened persons in the universe! for all these are still but men, subsequently to whose decision every one, according to your doctrine, ought still to examine. A private person shall believe he may have more grace, more light—in fine, more of the Holy Spirit than all the rest of the Church!" All this was to be allowed: and I might have added more than all the fathers, more than all past ages, reckoning immediately from the apostles' times. "But," proceeded I, "if it be so, how do you escape the difficulties of the Independents? and what means has the Church left to hinder there being as many religions, I do not say as there are parishes, but as there are heads?" He replied: "We have synods, which are means to hinder so great evils; means, although not infallible, yet profitable, as I have said. For, although a pastor that preaches is not infallible, his ministry ceases not to be profitable, because he declares the truth. Now a great assembly, composed of more persons, and those of greater learning, will yet better declare it." "Methinks, sir,"

replied I, "that you make every thing to consist in instruction: but this is not precisely either the intention or institution of synods, for oftentimes one learned individual will give more instruction than a whole synod together. What we are, therefore, to look for from a synod is not so much instruction as a decision by authority, which must be submitted to; for this it is which is needful both to the ignorant who doubt, and to the proud who contradict. An ignorant private person, if you leave him to himself, will confess to you that he knows not how to determine: and far from abating pride in a synod, you mount it to its highest pitch, since you oblige a private person to believe that he can understand the Scripture better than the synod and all the rest of the Church; and the synod itself, though assembled from the whole Church, upon being asked by him whose faith it is examining, whether it be not still his duty to examine after the synod, and whether it may not so fall out that he, though a private person, may understand the Scripture better than all the pastors assembled? the synod, though universal, must, according to your doctrine, declare that without doubt he may. Sir, presumption cannot go farther. And observe, pray, that these assemblies, which you propose as profitable means, are no longer so, when every one may believe that he has a better and the only one that can secure him, to wit: that of examining by himself and believing only his own judgment. This, sir, is perfect Independency; for the Independents neither refuse to hold synods for their mutual instruction, nor to receive those synods when they are satisfied with what these synods have laid down. They have held some, as you are aware." He acknowledged they had held one to frame their confession of faith. "Whether one or more," said I, "it matters not: they do not, then, absolutely reject them, and they reject in them precisely no more than you do, which is, the obligation of submitting to them without examining." And hereupon, to sum up in few words, this was my argument:—"The Independents approve of ecclesiastical assemblies for instruction; all they disallow is, the authoritative decision, which you will no more admit than they; you are then wholly conformable, and you ought not to have condemned them." "You see not, then, sir," said M. Claude, "that we deny not that there is an authority in synods—such a one as the paternal authority, such a one as the authority of magistrates, such a one as a master has over his scholars and a pastor over his flock; all these authorities have their use, and are not to be rejected under pretence that fathers, magistrates, and masters may be deceived: just so then with the authority of the Church."

"But, sir," answered I, "the Independents do not deny the authority of magistrates, nor the authority of masters over their scholars, nor of pastors over their flocks; they have pastors, in whose behalf they claim, as you do, a certain deference; and much more will they not deny that it ought to be paid to a whole synod. If, then, you accuse them of denying the authority of synods, you must add something to what they believe in respect of them, and there is nothing to be added but what we believe—which is, that we must submit to them without examining."

After this we did nothing for a little time on both sides but repeat the same things. Having called M. Claude's attention to this, I said: "In fine, sir, it would be an interminable dispute. A man has only to examine conscientiously and before God, whether he think himself capable of understanding the Scripture better than all councils and all the rest of the Church, and how such an opinion can agree with the docility and humility of God's children." I inculcated in few words what a pride it was for one to believe he could understand the word of God better than all the rest of the Church, and how, after this, every check was removed to there being as many religions as there are heads.

M. Claude here told me he wondered this proposition should appear so strange to me, that a private person might believe it possible for him to understand the Holy Scripture better than the whole Church assembled; that the case had occurred, and he could produce me several instances. The first in the Council of Rimini,* where the term "consubstantial" was rejected and Arianism set up. I interrupted him, saying, "Whither are you starting, sir? From the Council of Rimini you will bring us to the false Council of Ephesus, to the Council of Constance, to that of Basle, to that of Trent: when shall we have done, if we must here review all these councils? I declare to you that I will not engage in this discussion, since our question may be determined by something more precise. But, as you have mentioned the Council of Rimini, tell me, sir, whether the fathers of that council continued long in this erroneous† decision?" "Well, I believe, sir," said he, "they quickly retraced their steps." "Say, sir," answered I, "that as soon as the emperor Constantius, the declared protector of the Arians and persecutor of the faithful, had permitted them to retire, these bishops protested aloud against the violence and surprise that had been put upon them; oblige me not, sir, to

* A. D. 359. See Note A. † I should rather have said *equivocal* or *imperfect*.

relate this story, which you know as well as I, and acknowledge that it is unjust to compare a council manifestly coerced with assemblies held canonically and according to order." "Why, sir," replied M. Claude, "do not we say that the Council of Trent was neither free nor canonical?" "You say so, sir, and we deny it; and we have nothing to do with that dispute at present. The present question is, to know whether you can avoid Independency, and whether there be in your doctrine any remedy against this insupportable presumption of a private person, who must, according to your principles, believe that he can understand the Scripture better than the best assembled and best held œcumenical councils, and than all the rest of the Church together."

"We will then pass over the Council of Rimini, if you will," said M. Claude; "I will produce another indisputable example: it is the judgment of the synagogue when it condemned Jesus Christ, and consequently declared that he was not the Messiah promised by the prophets. Tell me, sir, would not a private person, who should then have believed our Lord to be the true Christ, have judged better than all the rest of the synagogue together. Here, then, is an unquestionable case for doing without presumption what you think so presumptuous. In fact," proceeded he, "it is no presumption not to give to the Church what belongs to God alone. We cannot give him any thing greater than to believe him implicitly, as you would have us believe the Church. But you know that St. Paul, at least as much inspired as the Church, forbears not to declare to the Corinthians that 'he will not have dominion over their faith.*' The Church ought still less to do it than he. We must not then believe her simply on her word: we must examine after her, and make use of our reason, as those of Berea did, 'who daily searched the Scriptures, to see whether the things were so'† as St. Paul had preached to them."

When M. Claude had done, "Here," said I, "are many things: but we must first consider this indisputable example you have proposed to us." Upon this I observed to him that the Christian Church had great privileges above the synagogue, even considering the synagogue in the time of its greatest splendor: but, not to mention this, that it was a strange thing to compare the synagogue (falling at the very moment, when its obduracy and reprobation were clearly marked by the prophets) with the Christian Church, which is never to fall. "But after all, sir," replied he, "one might have then addressed to this

* 2 Cor. i. 23.

† Acts xvii. 11.

private person the same argument that you address to us. To allege the prophecies availed nothing : for it was on the application of these prophecies to Jesus Christ that the synagogue was in doubt. So a private individual could not even believe in Jesus Christ without at the same time believing that he had a more correct understanding of the Scripture than the whole synagogue : and this is the argument that you address to us."

There were but few persons at the conference, and they were all Huguenots, except the lady of Marshall De Lorges. I saw two of these gentlemen look on one another with complacency. I regretted that a reasoning so manifestly vicious should make such an impression on their minds ; and I besought God to give me grace to overturn, by something that should be clear, the odious comparison which was instituted between his ever-beloved Church and the faithless synagogue at that very moment he had determined to repudiate the latter.

"You say then, sir," I said to M. Claude, "that the argument I propose may authorize the error of those private persons who condemned Jesus Christ on the faith of the synagogue, and on the contrary condemn those of presumption who believed Jesus Christ alone, preferably to the whole synagogue." "Yes, sir," said he, "just so ;" and he went over his reasoning again. I replied : "Let us examine whether my argument involve this pernicious consequence. It consists, sir, in saying that, upon denying the Church's authority, there remain no external means which God can make use of to clear the doubts of the ignorant, and inspire the faithful with necessary humility. To warrant the application of such an argument to the time when Jesus Christ was condemned, it must be contended that there then existed no external means, no certain authority to which men were necessarily to submit. Now, sir, who can say this since Jesus Christ was upon earth—that is, the Truth itself visibly manifested in the midst of men ; the eternal Son of God, to whom a voice from on high bore witness before all the people, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him ;'* who, to confirm his mission, raised the dead, healed those that were born blind, and wrought so many miracles that the Jews themselves confessed never any man had done the like. There was then, sir, an external means, a visible authority. But it was contested, it is true ; but it was infallible. I do not pretend, sir, the Church's authority is never contested ; I hear you, sir, contest it ; but I say it ought not to be contested by Christians. I say that she is infallible ; I say that there never was a

* Matt. iii. 17.

time when there was not on earth a visible and speaking authority to which it was a duty to submit. Before Jesus Christ we had the synagogue; when the synagogue was on the point of falling away, Jesus Christ himself appeared; when Jesus Christ withdrew, he left his Church, to which he sent his Holy Spirit. Bring again Jesus Christ, teaching, preaching, working miracles, I have no longer need of the Church: but, then, take from me the Church, I need have Jesus Christ in person, speaking, preaching, deciding with miracles, and an infallible authority.” “But you have his word.” “Yes, we have, without doubt, a word holy and adorable, but such a one as may be explained and handled at pleasure, and makes no reply to those that misunderstand it. I say we must have an external means of resolving doubts, and an assured means. And, not to go over again the reasons already alleged, having at present only to answer your objection concerning the error of the synagogue in condemning our Saviour,—so far from being able to say I contend that there was then no assured external means or speaking authority, to which men were obliged to submit their judgments, you must avow there was one, the highest and most infallible that ever was, which is that of Jesus Christ, and therefore that there was never any time when the argument I use against Protestants could be less applicable: the argument that they are destitute of an external, infallible means to determine doubts about the Scriptures.”

Having said this, I felt there was no reply to be made me; in fact, not a word was said to me upon it, although I paused to hear what answer would be made. I will not say that M. Claude remained silent. This is a result hardly to be expected in conferences of this nature. He repeated something of what he had already said, and insisted afresh on what the apostle himself had declared, that he did not exercise dominion over conscience.

I was overjoyed that he returned to this passage, which I had intended to explain before, but was fain to address myself to the most urgent point, which was the instance of the synagogue. This being disposed of, I only asked M. Claude whether the apostle's meaning, in saying to the Corinthians, “we have not dominion over your faith,” was that they were to examine after him. He saw well it was not, and confessed it. I concluded: “Nor does the Church, sir, pretend to have dominion over faith when she requires us to assent to her decisions; because she asserts not this authority of herself any more than St. Paul did, but ascribes it to the Holy Ghost, who inspires her.” “Then,” said M. Claude, “you put on the same

level St. Paul, author of the revelation, and the Church, which is barely its interpreter." "No, sir," replied I, "I do not place the Church on a level with St. Paul; but I say, that to lay claim to credence without examination, whilst deeming oneself only as an instrument of which the Holy Ghost makes use, is not to domineer over conscience, as the example of St. Paul demonstrates. But I do not pretend to equal the Church's authority to the apostolical. The apostles were authors of revelation, as you have very justly observed,—that is, they first received the truths which it pleased God to reveal anew: the Church is only the interpreter and depository; but, keeping to this essential difference between the apostles and the Church, I say, that the Church is as much inspired to interpret as the apostles were to establish; and that holding the grace of interpretation from the same Spirit who gave the first revelation to the apostles, she no more domineers over conscience in interpreting, than the apostles did in establishing; but that both the one and the other bring the Holy Ghost to have dominion over them, according to the measure which is given to every one." "It ought to be proved," said M. Claude, "that the Church has received such a grace." "There is no need of proving," answered I immediately: "it is sufficient to show that the passage you allege is not conclusive."

To this nothing was said. But, if I remember well, M. Claude amplified for a while on the strangeness of professing to oblige men to believe the Church, like God himself, upon her bare word, without making use, for the interpretation of Scripture, of the reason God himself had given us; that the Bereans had done otherwise; and that the apostle, according to our opinion, was much to blame for allowing them to examine his preachings.

I answered that there was a very great difference between the faithful, already children of the Church, and subject to her authority, and those that still doubted whether they should enter into her bosom. That the Bereans were in this last condition, and the apostle would never have proposed to them the Church's authority, whereof they doubted: but that the faithful were not instructed in the same manner, after the Council of Jerusalem. There the apostles decide by the authority of the Holy Ghost: "It hath seemed good," say they, "to the Holy Ghost and to us."* What do Paul and Silas, bearers of the council's letter, after this? "They went through the cities," as it is in the Acts:† What, to cause the Council of Jerusalem's

* Acts xv. 28.

† Acts xvi. 4.

decree to be there examined? This would have been to examine after the Holy Ghost himself. What then? "They went through the cities, delivering them the decrees for to keep that were ordained by the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." Such is the course observable. Examination in the council; obedience without examining, after the decision; examination on the part of the Berceans—that is, of those who, not being in the Church, have yet no authority to regulate them; submission without examination on the part of those who, being already in the Church, are only to hearken to her decrees. It is their happiness to be in a body which, guided by the Holy Ghost, can never be deceived, and thus to be spared the danger of an examination which would perhaps end in error.

The conference had already lasted four hours; I already had from M. Claude's acknowledgment one of the propositions I wished him to admit, "that every particular person ought to believe he may understand the Holy Scripture better than the universal councils and all the rest of the Church." He was moreover to allow the other proposition—no less important: God brought him to do so in the following manner.

As he had spoken much of this domineering of the Church over consciences, repeating three or four times, that we gave her the respect which was due to none but God alone, in believing her without examining,—I told him he ought not to regard as so singular what those of his communion did as well as we; and I proceeded to inquire, whether a believer, at his first receiving the Holy Scripture from the Church, was obliged to doubt, and then to examine whether the book she put into his hand were verily inspired by God or not? If the believer examine and doubt, he renounces the faith, and begins the reading of the gospel by an act of infidelity; and if he do not doubt, he receives then, without examining, the authority of the Church which presents him the gospel.

M. Claude's answer was as follows. "The believer you suppose, who has not read the Holy Scripture, and into whose hands it is given, does not, to speak properly, doubt; he is ignorant; he knows not what this Scripture is which he is told is inspired by God. He has heard his father and instructors say that it was divinely inspired; as yet he knows no other authority than theirs; and as for Scripture, he knows not what it is. Thus he cannot be said to be unbelieving or incredulous." "And pray, sir," said he, "let me address to you the same argument with reference to the Church, as you address to me with reference to the Scripture. The believer to whom the Church's authority is proposed, either believes it without ex-

amining, or doubts about it. If he doubts, he is an infidel: if he doubts not, by what other authority is he assured? Is the Church's authority a thing evident of itself, and is not some examination necessary to find it? This is your difficulty, which you have to solve as well as I; either let us both leave it aside, or both resolve it. On my part, I declare to you that I will answer for the Scripture, what you shall answer me for the Church."

"Very well," I answered; "but before I explain to you how a Christian believes the Church, it is material to establish the fact under consideration. Is it not undeniable, sir, that amongst you, as well as amongst us, when the Holy Scripture is shown to children educated in the Church, it is shown them as a book inspired by God? and I ask whether they cannot, when they are asked to read a portion, make this previous act of faith: 'I firmly believe, that what I am going to read is God's word?'" M. Claude answered here, that those of whom I spoke had yet no divine faith concerning the authority of the Scripture, but a bare human persuasion, grounded on the deference they had for their parents, and that they were but Catechumens. "Catechumens, sir!" said I; "you must not, if you please, speak so. They are Christians; they are baptized; they have in them the Holy Ghost and infused faith; they are in the covenant, according to you; they have received baptism, as a seal of the covenant to which they are admitted; and as the covenant is sealed in them by this outward seal of baptism, the Holy Ghost seals it inwardly in their hearts. Recognize your own doctrine." "As to this," said M. Claude; "you know that one might demur: but I own to what you say." "Well, then," answered I, "if it be so, they are, by the grace of the Holy Ghost and infused faith, in condition to make an act of faith upon the faith's being preached to them: now I ask, whether, when the Scripture, acknowledged by the whole Church for the inspired word of God, is shewn them, they are not in condition to make with the whole Church this act of faith: 'I believe that this Scripture is God's word, as I believe that God is?'"

M. Claude would never acknowledge this, but persisted in answering, that they had yet only a human persuasion about the Scripture, and that they would not have divine faith in its regard till they had read it. "If they have," said I, "but a human persuasion, they have but a doubtful persuasion; and consequently they doubt of that which is according to you, the whole foundation of faith: in one word, they are infidels." "No," said he, "they are barely ignorant; and you must say just the same of the faith one has in the Church, for it is not a matter of easy

discussion to discern which is the true Church ; and before one is in a condition to know it of one's self, one is ignorant of it, or one has at most but a bare human persuasion on the faith of one's parents. So, once more, what you shall say with reference to the Church, that same I will say with reference to the Scripture."

"Let us see, Sir," answered I, "whether you will say it, or whether you will be warranted in saying it. You acknowledge then that a baptized Christian, who has neither read the Holy Scripture nor heard it read, is not in a condition to make this act of faith—'I believe that this Scripture is God's word, as I believe that God is.' This is an awful evil, that a believer cannot make so essential an act of faith. It is not so amongst us; for the believer, who receives the Holy Scripture from the hands of the Church, makes with the whole Church this act of faith—'As I believe that God is, so I believe that this Scripture is the word of Him, in whom I believe;' and I say that he cannot make this act of faith, but by the faith he has already in the authority of the Church, which presents him the Scripture. It will be necessary," I went on to observe, "to explain thoroughly, but at the same time simply, in what order Christians are instructed concerning the truth of the Scriptures. I speak not of infidels; I speak of baptized Christians, and I desire you to observe well this distinction. There are two things here to be considered. The one is, who it is that inspires us with the act of faith, whereby we believe the Holy Scripture as God's word, and we admit that it is the Holy Ghost; hereupon we are agreed. The other thing to be considered is, what external means the Holy Ghost uses to bring us to believe the Holy Scripture, and I say that it is the Church. For evidence that it is so, we need only turn to the Apostles' Creed, the first instruction which a believer receives: he has not read the Holy Scripture, and already he believes in God, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, and the universal Church. There is no mention made to him of the Scripture, but the believing the universal Church is proposed to him as soon as the believing in the Holy Ghost. These two articles, the Holy Ghost and the Church, find their way to his heart together; because he who believes in the Holy Ghost necessarily also believes the universal Church which the Holy Ghost directs. I say, then, that the first act of faith which the Holy Ghost puts in the hearts of baptized Christians is to believe, with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the universal Church; and that this is the outward means whereby the Holy Ghost insinuates the belief of the Holy Scripture into the heart. If this means is not certain, the faith in the

Scripture will consequently be doubtful. But as the Catholic has always found this means certain, there is not any moment in which he cannot say, 'As I believe that God is, I believe that God has spoken to men, and that this Scripture is his word.' And the ground for his being able at once to make this act of faith is this:—he never doubted of the Church's authority, and this is the first thing which the Holy Ghost put in his heart with faith in God and in Jesus Christ. As to your inquiry, how he believes the Church; that is not precisely our question. It is sufficient we see he does believe it, since it is the first thing the Holy Ghost puts in his heart, and is the outward means of bringing him to believe the Holy Scripture—the Scripture of which he never doubts, since he never doubted of the Church which presents it to him. This, sir, is our doctrine, and because it is not yours, you necessarily fall into the inconveniences I have noted. Because you believe not the Church's authority as a thing which cannot fail, we show you a point of time in which you cannot make an act of faith upon the Scripture, and in which consequently, you cease to be a believer."

M. Claude here observed that the child who recited the Creed spoke like a parrot, without understanding what he said; and so we ought not to insist much on that: and besides that it was a gratuitous assertion, that to believe the universal Church was the first act of faith which the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of the baptized Christian, to insinuate to him, by that means, faith in the Holy Scripture; in fine, that I left unanswered his enquiry concerning the Church, and how we began to believe her; for, said he, the Holy Ghost is the principle of belief and not the motive of belief; that it was requisite therefore, I should explain how we believe the Church, and upon what ground, and that, from my manner of speaking, it seemed as if we believed her by enthusiasm, and without any motive inducing us so to do.

To this I answered, that I would not have the Church to be believed by enthusiasm; that for acknowledging her there were divers motives of credibility which the Holy Ghost suggested to his faithful, according to his good pleasure; that he was well aware of them, but they were not actually under consideration. "Our business now is," said I, "to learn whether the outward means which the Holy Ghost uses to bring us to believe the Holy Scripture be not the Church's authority. I advance nothing gratuitous when I say that it is the first thing which the Holy Ghost puts in the hearts of baptized Christians; because, from their very first receiving of the Creed, the universal Church is spoken of to them, and she is proposed to their belief without any mention of the Scripture. It is to no purpose to say, that

children repeat at first like parrots, both the Creed and the name of the universal Church. Let us leave," said I, "the parrot, that only speaks by rote; let us come to the time when the Christian has the use of reason, and when he can make an act of faith. With what is he to begin, if not with the point on which his instruction commenced? His belief of the universal Church is therefore prior to his belief of the Scripture. In fact, let, I do not say a child, but any man you please, read the Canticle of Canticles, in which there is no mention of God one way or the other. Verily, he believes this book divinely inspired by God, solely because of the tradition, first, of the synagogue, and secondly, of the Christian Church; that is, in one word, on the authority of the universal Church. But let us keep to our point. Let us consider the Christian at the period when the Holy Scripture is proposed to him as the word of God:—it is the Holy Ghost that brings him to believe it; we are agreed on that point, but we are discussing the outward means of which the Holy Ghost makes use. I say that it is the Church, because it is she in fact that proposes to him the Holy Scripture; because he believed the Church before he heard of the Scripture; because upon his opening the Scripture, he is prepared to say, 'I believe this Scripture, as I believe that God is.' You say, he cannot make this act of faith; he is then no believer, and his baptism avails him nought. We must instruct him as an infidel, saying to him: 'Here is the Scripture, which I believe inspired by God; read it, child; examine it; see, whether it be the very truth or a fable. The Church believes it inspired by God, but the Church may be deceived, and thou art not in condition to make with her this act of faith,—As I believe that God is, so I believe that he himself inspired this Scripture.' If such a method of instructing makes a Christian shudder,—if it leads manifestly to impiety, a Christian must be able, at first, to make an act of faith upon the Scripture proposed to him by the Church; he must consequently believe that the Church is not deceived in giving him this Scripture. As he receives from her the Scripture, he receives from her the interpretation of it, and she no more exercises dominion over the conscience, in obliging her children to believe her interpretations without examining, than she does in obliging us to believe, without examining, the Scripture itself."

"By this argument," replied M. Claude, "you would make every one conclude in favor of his own Church. The Greeks, the Armenians, the Ethiopians, and we ourselves, whom you believe to be in error, we are nevertheless baptized; we by baptism have both the Holy Ghost and this infused faith of which

you have been speaking. Every one of us has received the Holy Scripture from the Church in which he was baptized; every one believes his to be the true Church declared in the Creed; and, at first, he is not even aware of any other. Now if, as we have received the Scripture without examining from the hand of that Church in which we are, we must also, as you say, receive implicitly all its interpretations, it is an argument to conclude that every one ought to continue as he is, and that every religion is good."

This was, in truth, the strongest objection that could be made: and though the solution of this difficulty appeared clear to me, I was in pain how I might render it clear to those who heard me. I spoke with trembling, seeing it concerned the salvation of a soul; and I besought God, who made me see the truth so clearly, that he would give me words to set it forth distinctly: for I had to do with a man, who heard patiently, spoke clearly and strongly, and, in fine, pushed difficulties to the utmost points.

I told him I must first distinguish their case from that of the Greeks, Armenians and others he had named, who indeed err, in taking a false Church for the true, but at least believe as indubitable, that the true Church, wheresoever she is, must be believed, and that she never deceives her children. "You are," said I, to him, "much farther off: for I can lay to your charge, that you do not only, like the Greeks and Ethiopians, take a false Church for a true, but (as is undeniable, and as you yourself confess) you will not have us even believe the true. After this distinction, which has seemed necessary to me, let us come to your difficulty. Let us distinguish, in the belief of the Greeks and other false Churches, what there is of truth,—what they have in common with the true universal Church; in a word, what comes from God, from that which comes from human prejudice. God, by his Holy Spirit, puts in the heart of those who are baptized in these Churches that there is a God, a Christ the Saviour, and a Holy Ghost. Thus far there is no error; all this is from God. Is it not so?" He agreed. "They believe also that there is a universal Church: are they not right in this, and is it not a truth revealed by God that there is one indeed?" I waited for the admission: and having received it, I added, that the Greeks and Ethiopians were disposed to believe, without examining, whatever the true Church proposed to them. "This is, sir, what you do not approve: in this you withdraw from all other Christians, who unanimously believe that there is a true Church, which never deceives her children. I, who believe this with them, reckon this belief amongst the things which come from God. But here is the point where human prejudices

begin. This baptized person, being led astray by his parents and pastors, believes the Church in which he is to be the true, and attributes in particular to this false Church all that God makes him believe in general of the true. It is not the Holy Ghost that puts this in his heart. Is it not so? Unquestionably, it is so. At this point he begins to believe amiss; here then error begins; here divine faith infused by the Holy Ghost begins to be lost. Happy are those whose human prejudices are arrayed on the side of the true belief which the Holy Ghost puts in their hearts! They are spared a grievous temptation, and the awful difficulty there is to distinguish what is from God, in the faith of their Church, from that which is from men. But whatever difficulty men have to distinguish these things, God knows and distinguishes them; and there will be an everlasting difference between that which the Holy Ghost puts in the heart of the baptized, when he interiorly disposes them to believe the true Church, and that which human prejudices have added to it, by bringing their minds to adhere to a false one. How these baptized persons may afterwards disentangle these things, and by what means they may release themselves from the prepossession that has made them confound the idea of the false Church in which they are, with the faith of the true Church which the Holy Ghost has put in their hearts together with the Creed, is not now in debate; and it is enough for us to have seen in all the baptized a belief of the Church which comes to them from God, distinguished from the notion which comes to them from men. This being so, I affirm that to this belief of the Church, which the Holy Ghost puts in our hearts with the Creed, a firm faith is annexed; that we must believe this Church as certainly as the Holy Ghost, with whom the Creed itself puts her in immediate connection; and that it is because of this faith in the Church that the believer never doubts of the Scripture."

I stopped a moment, to ask whether I were understood. M. Claude replied, he understood me perfectly. "And if so," said I to him, "you must see the embarrassment in which your belief involves you, and must also see that I am not in the same by mine. You not only say that we must not believe a false Church, but that we must not even believe the true one without examining what she says; and in this you speak against all other Christians."

Mademoiselle De Duras here interposed, saying: "This is what must be answered by Aye or No." "I do say so," answered M. Claude, "and I did not hesitate to say so at first." "So much the better," replied I. "We shall soon see which of us two is in the right; and, in the clear state things have

been put by our reciprocal discourses, the defeat will soon appear on one side or the other.

"From the time you lay it down as certain that the Church, even the true one, may deceive us, the Christian cannot believe, on the bare faith of the Church, that the Scripture is the word of God." "He may believe it with a human faith," answered M. Claude, "but not with a divine faith." "But human faith," replied I, "is always defective and doubting. He doubts then whether the Scripture be inspired by God or not." M. Claude here requested me to bear in mind what he had already said—that he was not in doubt but in ignorance. "As a man," said he, "not skilled in diamonds, being shown one, and asked whether he believe it to be good or bad;—he knows nothing about it, he is not in doubt, but in ignorance. In the same way, when a master teaches some opinion in philosophy, the scholar, who as yet does not understand his meaning, has no formal doubt; he is in mere ignorance. So it is with those to whom the Holy Scripture is the first time given." I answered: "I contend that he doubts, and that he who is not skilled in diamonds doubts whether that which is presented to him be good or bad, and that the scholar, with reason, doubts of all his master in philosophy tells him, until he sees it clear, because he believes not his master infallible; and by the same reason, he who believes not the Church infallible doubts of the truth of God's word which she proposes to him." "This is called ignorance, not doubt," M. Claude still continued to say:—I therefore proposed the following argument. "To doubt is not to know whether a thing be or not. The Christian of whom we speak knows not whether the Scripture be true or not. He is in doubt therefore on the point. Tell me what is it to doubt, but not to know, whether a thing be or not." To this no reply was given, save that this Christian did not in any manner doubt of the Scripture, but was only ignorant of it. "But," said I, "he is not like an infidel, who perhaps never heard any mention of it; he knows that the gospel of St. Matthew and St. Paul's epistles are read in the Church as God's word, and that none of the faithful doubt their being so. Can he believe, with them, as certainly as he believes God to exist, that this word is inspired by God? You have said that he cannot make this act of faith. He that cannot make an act of faith on an article proposed to him, makes at least, as I may so say, an act of doubt." M. Claude still answered that he was in a mere ignorance.—"Well, let us leave disputing about words: he does not doubt, if you please; but he knows not whether this Scripture be a truth or a fable; he knows not whether the gospel be a history inspired by God, or a tale invented by men. He can-

not, then, make an act of divine faith upon this point, and say: 'I believe as God is, that the gospel is also from God.' Do you not acknowledge, that he cannot make this act, and that he has nothing but a human faith?" He again frankly acknowledged that he regarded it as nothing else. "Well, sir, that is enough. So then, after all, there is a point of time, when every baptized Christian knows not whether the gospel be not a fable; this is given him to examine. See to what we must come, when we are set to examine subsequently to the Church. We might discourse without end. But we have said all that can be said on both sides, and we should do nothing but begin again. It is for each one to examine in his conscience how he can maintain that a baptized Christian should ever have been a moment without knowing whether the gospel be a truth or a fable, and that, amongst other inquiries which one may institute during life, this also should be given him to enter upon."

It appeared to me by the countenance of Mademoiselle de Duras that she understood me. I, however, waited a little, and M. Claude rose. Mademoiselle de Duras rose with us, and coming to us, said: "I could wish that before you go, you would say something concerning the separation." "The thing is done," answered I. "As soon as it is certain that one cannot examine after the Church, without falling into an insupportable pride, or without doubting of the gospel, there is nothing more to be said. Every one need only consider whether he would have the gospel doubted of for a moment, and also whether he feel himself capable of understanding the Scripture better than all the synods in the world, and than all the rest of the universal Church. But since Mademoiselle desires some particular elucidation concerning the separation, I request you, sir, give me a moment more. I shall propose to you essential facts, on which, if I be not deceived, you must soon agree. I ask you, sir, whether the Arians separated from the Church, and whether their sect, when it appeared, was not new?" "They did not," said he, "separate from the Church; they corrupted it." He began to represent, with a great deal of exaggeration, how they drew with them the whole Church. "It is not so, sir," said I: "you know that St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and many other holy bishops, were steady to the truth, and that a great body of the people followed them. You know that all the West, and Rome itself notwithstanding the fall of Liberius, was orthodox. But let us leave all this aside," said I to him; "in what number soever they separated, there was a Church before them, from which they broke, and against which they set up another Church." "No," said he, "they corrupted it."

"Why, sir," said I, "what difficulty is this? Never did any heretic separate but by corrupting some of the Church's children, and separating with them from the Church, in which they had all been baptized. But after all, tell me, sir, was not the sect of the Arians, and that Church which is named the Arian, new?" "If you mean, sir," answered he, "that Arius was the first who spoke against the divinity of the Son of God, it is not true. Origen, before him, and Justin Martyr, said the same thing." "Ha, sir," said I, "that a martyr denied the divinity of God's Son, is what I shall never believe. As to Origen, you know that he is quoted both for and against it. He is a doubtful and suspected author. But, sir, let us leave uncertain facts, and let us endeavor to find one, about which both you and I may agree. That sect which, after the condemnation pronounced against Arius, joined this excommunicated priest, and formed a Church against the Church—was not that sect new?" He could not but grant it. "In order to prove its being new, was it requisite to go back to the apostles? and could not one say to it, 'Church, separated from that other Church, in which Arius was born and in which he received baptism, you were neither yesterday nor the day before?'" "One might," said M. Claude. "May one not say as much of the Macedonian Church, which denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost? of the Nestorians, who divided Jesus Christ's person? of the Eutychians, that confounded his two natures? and of the Pelagians, who denied original sin and the grace of Jesus Christ. Might one not say to *them*, without going back to the apostles: 'When you came into the world, you found the Church baptizing children unto the remission of sins, and praying for the conversion of sinners and infidels?' Therefore what all these heretics, and all the rest whom you and we know, combated, was believed, not only in the apostles' times, but yesterday and the day before and at the time when the heresiarchs appeared, and they found the Church in possession of this belief." "But," answered M. Claude, "there are two ways of establishing error; the one open, and the other secret and imperceptible." "Stay, sir," said I to him; "we ought to propose evident facts, which both parties admit. I do not admit this imperceptible way of establishing error." "Why, sir," said he, "will you say that you will find praying to saints, and purgatory, in the apostles' time?" "No, sir," answered I, "I will say nothing thereon, for you will not admit it, and I wish to say such things as you admit. Deal in the same manner with me. He that shall draw most solid advantages from facts granted by his adversary, will have a great argument that the truth is for him; for it is the property of truth to maintain

itself every way, and to condemn error by the very facts which error acknowledges. And since you mention prayer to saints, I put it to your candor: is it not true that M. Daillé grants us thirteen hundred years' antiquity?" "Thirteen hundred years, sir," answered he, "is not the whole time of the Church." "I admit that," said I to him; "but, after all, my adversary grants me already thirteen hundred years; he gives me St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin." "All these," said M. Claude, "are but men." "Let them be men as much as you please, but at any rate we have, from our adversary's confession, thirteen hundred years for the invocation of saints and veneration of relics, for these two things were joined together, as you know M. Daillé asserts. And how much does M. Blondel grant for prayer for the dead?" "It is true," said M. Claude, "that is the most ancient error of the Church." "Fourteen hundred years' antiquity," said I to him, "is what M. Blondel yields us. I say not this to create a presumption for the truth of our doctrine; that is not the matter in hand: but I say it to show that we are not without defence upon these examples of errors imperceptibly propagated, since we already have by your consent thirteen hundred and fourteen hundred years. Let us come then to evident facts, on which I may agree; for you, on your part, agree that the Arians, Nestorians, Pelagians, and in one word, all heretics established themselves in the manner I have stated. They found no Church wherewith to unite themselves. They erected one, which separated from all the other Churches that then were. This is certain; is it not manifest?" I waited for a reply; M. Claude did not contradict. I did not deem myself obliged to press him any farther on a thing evident and already owned. "Now," said I to him, "how were the orthodox Churches established? When particular persons and nations—for example, the Indians—were converted, did they not find a Church already established to which they united themselves?" He acknowledged it. "Did *you*," I proceeded, "find one in the whole world to which you joined yourselves? Did you embrace the Greek, the Armenian, or the Ethiopian Church, when you forsook the Roman? Can we not point out to you the precise date of your Churches, and say to all that Church, to all that external society in which you are minister, '*you were not yesterday*.'" "But," said M. Claude here, "Were we not of this Church? We went not out; we were driven out of it; we were excommunicated in the Council of Trent. Thus we went out, but we carried the Church with us." "What language! sir," said I to him. "If you had not been driven out, would you have staid in it?"

To what purpose, then, is that command so often repeated amongst you: 'Go forth from Babylon, my people.' Tell me candidly; would you have staid in the Church if she had not driven you out?" "Assuredly not, sir," said M. Claude. "To what purpose, then," answered I, "do you say here, that you were driven out?" "Because," said he, "it is true." "Well, sir," said I, "it is true. This is common to you (be not displeased at what I am going to say)—this is common to you with all heretics. The Church in which they received baptism cast them forth, excommunicated them. They would perhaps have willingly staid in it, to corrupt and seduce; but the Church cut them off. And as to what you say, that you were in this Church, which cast you out, and that you carried the Church with you, what heretic may not say as much? It was not of heathens that the ancient heretics composed their Churches; it was of Christians bred in the Church. In like manner, you have not formed yours by gathering Mahometans, I admit. But in this you abide by the examples of the ancient heretics, and they were all able to say, as well as you, that they were condemned by their adversaries. For they were not made to sit amongst the judges, when their novelty was condemned." "But, sir," said M. Claude, "we are not both agreed about this novelty. What is in the Scripture is no novelty." "Patience, sir, I beseech you," said I to him; "none of the ancient heretics allowed the novelty of their doctrine; they all quoted the Holy Scripture in their favor: but there was *one* novelty which they could not deny, to wit, that the body of their Church was not yesterday, and this you granted." "Well, after all," said M. Claude, "if the Arians, if the Nestorians, if the Pelagians, had been right in the main point, they would not have been to blame for the way of proceeding." "Whether to blame or not," said I to him, "is the main point of the question; but at all events it is manifest that you have the same proceeding as they, the same conduct, the same defences; in a word, that, in forming your Church, you have done as all heretics did, and we do what all the orthodox have done; every one may judge in his conscience which class he had rather resemble, and I have no more to say."

M. Claude was not silent on this occasion. He told me this argument was excellent in favor of Jews and Pagans: and that they might maintain their cause by the reason I made use of. "Let us see," said I to him, "sir, and remember that you promise us the same argument." "Unquestionably the same," answered he. "The Jews and Pagans upbraided the Christians with their novelty; of this you are aware. The writings of Celsus and many others are proofs of it." "I admit it," said I to

him; "and is this all?" "And it was true," proceeded he, "that all Christianity *was* new, if we regard the state immediately preceding." "What," said I to him; "when Jesus Christ began to preach, could they say to him, as I do to you, that in the Church he was born in there was no mention yesterday of him or his coming? What, then, were St. John the Baptist, Anne the prophetess, Simeon, the wise men, and the priests consulted by Herod, when they answered him that the place of his birth was in Bethlehem? Was it requisite to go back to Abraham, in order to prove the antiquity of the promises? Was there ever a single moment when Christ was not expected in the Church wherein he was born? and so expected, that the Jews expect him still? It is very true, sir, there was a necessity this novelty should once be seen to happen, and this change from Christ expected to Christ come. However, Jesus Christ is not, therefore, new. He was yesterday, he is to day, and will be for ever."* "It is true," said M. Claude; "but the synagogue did not allow that Jesus was the Christ." "But," replied I, "the synagogue did not condemn St. John the Baptist; but the synagogue heard, without contradicting them, the wise men, Simeon, and Anna. Jesus Christ gathered in the synagogue a true Church at the time, the children of God which it contained. At last the synagogue condemned him. However, Jesus Christ had already founded his Church: he gave it its last form presently after his death, and the new people followed the old without interruption. These are undeniable truths: and as to paganism, it is true the Pagans upbraided the Christians with their novelty. But what did the Christians answer? Did they not show that the Jews had always believed the same God which the Christians adored, and expected the same Christ; that the Jews believed all this yesterday, and the day before, and always without interruption?" "But, sir," once more said M. Claude, "the Gentiles did not allow all this." "What," answered I; "was there amongst them any one so unreasonable as to say, there were never any Jews, or that this people did not expect a Christ, and did not adore one only God, creator of heaven and earth? Did not they show the Pagans the manifest beginning of their opinions and the date—I do not say of the authors of their tenets, but—of their gods themselves; and this by their own histories, by their own authors, by their own chronology? Do you believe that a Pagan could make a Christian confess that the Christian religion was new, or that there never had been any society which held the same belief the Christians had then; just as I

* Heb. xiii. 8.

make you own that all the heretics, which you and I acknowledge for such, came in this manner, and that you have done as they did? This is the way, sir, you prove that Jews and Pagans might maintain their cause by the argument I use. No one can ever do it; nor ever can any one deny the evident fact which I affirm, which is—that we do as all the orthodox, and you as all heretics have done.”

Here the conversation ended: it lasted five hours, with a great attention of the whole assembly. We heard one another peaceably; we spoke on both sides consecutively enough; and except at the beginning, when M. Claude digressed a little from the subject, he throughout came to the matter, and faced the difficulty without recoiling. It is true, he aimed rather to entangle me in the perplexities in which I entailed him than to show how he could himself get out: however, all this proceeded from the cause, and assuredly he said every thing his could furnish him with on the point to which we had confined ourselves. For my part, I was desirous not to quit it, since it was that which Mademoiselle de Duras desired to have cleared. She appeared to me touched; I nevertheless retired trembling, and fearing lest my weakness might have put her soul in danger, and the truth in doubt.

SEQUEL OF THE CONFERENCE.

I VISITED her next day. I was glad to see she perfectly understood what I had said. This is what I had promised her. I had represented to her, that amidst the immense difficulties, which the spirit of cavilling and the depth of the Christian doctrine had caused to spring up amongst men, God would have his children provided with an easy means to resolve themselves in what concerned their salvation, and this means was the Church's authority; that this means was easy to establish, easy to understand, easy to follow; "so easy," said I, "and so clear, that if you shall not understand me in what I shall say upon it, I am contented you believe me to be in the wrong." This in fact must be the case, when the matter is well handled; but I dared not promise myself that I had treated it as I ought. I discovered with joy and thanksgiving that God had turned all to good. The arguments that ought to affect, affected her. Mademoiselle de Duras could not comprehend how an ignorant private person could, without intolerable pride, believe he might happen to understand the Scripture better than all the universal councils and all the rest of the Church. She saw, as well as I, how weak was the example of the synagogue's condemnation of Jesus Christ, and how little reason there was to say that individuals who believed aright needed an external authority to determine them, when they had in the person of Jesus Christ the greatest and most visible authority that can be imagined. I passed again over the doubt in which one must be touching the Scripture; if one doubted the Church's authority. She said she never so much as thought that a Christian might doubt one moment concerning the Scripture; and besides, she perfectly understood that M. Claude, rejecting the *word* doubt, acknowledged the thing in other terms; which served only to show how hard this matter was both to think and say, since, being forced to own it, he thought not fit to do it in simple terms; for in fine, not to know whether a thing be or not, if it be not to doubt, is nothing. It appeared then clearly, that the two propositions which were in debate were established; and I showed her, in few words, that her Church, by believing two such strange things, had changed the whole order of instructing God's children practised at all times in the Christian Church.

To this effect, it was only necessary to repeat to her what she had heard me say, and what she had heard M. Claude grant. However, God put in my heart something more express, and I said to her as follows :—

“ The order of instructing God’s children is, to teach them, before all things, the Apostles’ Creed : ‘ I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost ; the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,’ &c. As much as the faithful believes in God the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, so much does he believe the universal Church, where the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost is adored. As much, I say, as he believes the Father, so much does he believe the Church which professes to believe that God, the Father of Jesus Christ, has adopted children whom he has united to his Son. As much as he believes in the Son, so much does he believe the Church, which he assembled by his blood, which he established by his doctrine, which he founded on the rock, and against which he has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail. As much as he believes in the Holy Ghost, so much does he believe that Church to which the Holy Ghost was given as teacher. And he that says, ‘ I believe in God, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,’ does, in saying, ‘ I believe,’ make a profession ; with the heart he believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth he maketh a confession unto salvation, as St. Paul says,* and he knows that the faith he has is not a private sentiment. There is a Church, a society of men, which believes as he does. It is the universal Church, which is neither here, nor there, nor at this period, nor that. She is not confined to merely one country, like the ancient Jewish Church, nor is she to end, as that was ; and her kingdom shall not pass to another people, as it is written in Daniel.† She is at all times and in all places, and so widely spread, that whoever will come to her, may. She has no interruption in her succession, for there is no time when one could not say, ‘ I believe the universal Church,’ as there is no time when one could not say, ‘ I believe in God the Father, and in his Son, and in the Holy Ghost.’ This Church is holy, because whatsoever she teaches is holy ; because she teaches all the doctrine which makes men holy—that is to say, all the doctrine of Jesus Christ ; because she embraces all holy ones, all saints, in her one communion. And these saints must not only be united in spirit, they are outwardly united in the communion of this Church ; and this is what is meant by ‘ the com-

* Rom. x. 9, 10.

† Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 14.

munion of saints.' In this universal Church, in this communion of saints, is the remission of sins. Therein is baptism, by which sins are remitted : therein is the ministry of the keys, by which whatsoever is remitted or retained on earth is remitted or retained in heaven.* In this Church, then, you behold an external ministry, which lasts as long as the Church itself—that is to say, always ; since this Church is believed at all times not as a thing which has been, or is to be, but as a thing which actually is. See then to what this Church is joined, and what is joined to this Church. She is joined immediately to the Holy Ghost, which governs her : ' I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church.' To this Church is joined the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, life everlasting. Out of this Church, there is neither communion of saints, nor remission of sins, nor resurrection of the flesh to eternal life. Here then, you have the faith of the Church established in the Creed. The Creed makes no mention of the Scripture. Is it because it despises it? God forbid! you will receive the Scripture from the hands of the Church; and because you never doubted of the Church, you will never doubt of the Scripture, which the Church has received from God, from Jesus Christ, and from the apostles, which she always keeps as coming from that source, which she puts into the hands of all the faithful."

I thought I perceived that this doctrine, truly holy and apostolical, produced its due impression. " But there is," said I, " one word more. It is what I said to M. Claude, and I reduce it now to this plain argument, which every one may equally understand; I mean the learned as the ignorant, and the private person as the pastor. The baptized Christian, before he reads the Holy Scripture, can either make this act of faith, ' I believe that this word is inspired by God, as I believe that God is,' or he cannot. If he cannot, then he doubts of it; he is reduced to examine, whether the gospel be not a fable; but, if he can, by what means shall he do it?—The Holy Ghost will put it in his heart:—this is no answer; for it is agreed that faith in the Scripture comes from the Holy Ghost. The question is concerning the *external means* which the Holy Ghost uses, and there can be no other than the Church's authority. Thus every Christian receives from the Church, without examining, this Scripture, as a writing inspired by God.

" Let us go still further.—Does the Church only give us the Holy Scriptures on paper, the husk of the word, the body of the letter? No: without doubt, she gives us the spirit—that is,

* Matt. xvi. 19. John xx. 23.

the sense of the Scripture ; for to give us the Scripture without the sense, is to give us a body without a soul, a letter which killeth. The Scripture without its lawful interpretation, the Scripture destitute of its natural sense, is a weapon for self-destruction. The Arian destroyed himself, by the Scripture misunderstood ; so did the Nestorian ; so did the Pelagian. God forbid, then, that the Church should give us only the Scripture without giving us the sense of it. She received them both together. When she received the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Epistle to the Romans, and the rest, she understood them : this sense, which she received with the Scripture, she has kept with the Scripture ; and the same outward means which the Holy Ghost uses to make us receive the Holy Scripture, he uses also to give us its true sense. All this ensues from the same principle : all this is the sequel of the same design. As, then, there is nothing to examine after the Church when she gives us the Holy Scripture, so there is nothing to examine when she interprets it and proposes its true sense. And, accordingly, you see that, after the Council of Jerusalem, Paul and Silas said not—‘ Examine this decree,’ but taught the Churches to observe what the Apostles had judged.

“ This is the course of proceeding which the Church has invariably adopted. ‘ I should not believe the Gospel,’ says St. Augustin, ‘ were I not moved by the authority of the Catholic Church :’* and, a little after, ‘ Those whom I believed, when they said to me, believe the Gospel, shall I not believe, when they say, believe not Manichæus?’ This society of pastors, established by Jesus Christ and continued until now, when giving me the Gospel, has also told me that I must detest heretics and evil doctrine: I believe both together, and on the same

* Contra Epist. Fund. Manich.—[As this important passage has been often criticised and misinterpreted—(see Neander’s Ch. Hist. ii. 433, Clausen’s Augustinus, p. 41, &c.)—it may be well to exhibit it with its context.— librum quem *Fundamenti Epistolæ* dicitis, ubi totum pene quod creditis continetur. Certe sic incipit: ‘ Manichæus apostolus Jesu Christi, providentia Dei Patris. Hæc sunt salubria verba, de perenni et vivo fonte.’ Jam cum bonâ patientiâ, si placet, attendite quid queram. Non credo illum esse Apostolum Christi. . . . non credo: quid jam dicas aut facias non habebis: promittebas enim scientiam veritatis, et nunc quod nescio cogis ut credam. Evangelium mihi fortasse lecturus es, et inde Manichæi personam tentabis asserere. Si ergo invenires aliquem qui nondum credit, quid faceres dicenti illi, Non credo? Ego vero Evangelio non crederem nisi me catholicæ Ecclesiæ commoveret auctoritas. Quibus ergo obtemperavi dicentibus, Crede Evangelio: cur eis non obtemperem dicentibus mihi, Noli credere Manichæis? Elige quid velis. Si dixeris, Crede Catholicis, ipsi me monent ut nullam fidem accommodem vobis: quapropter non possum illis credens nisi tibi non credere. Si dixeris, Noli Catholicis credere: non recte facies per Evangelium me cogere ad Manichæi fidem, quia ipsi Evangelio Catholicis prædicantibus credidi . . . Tom. viii. p. 111. E. Ben.]

authority. After this manner were Christians instructed in the primitive times, in which heretics were told that they were not to be admitted to dispute about the Scripture, 'because without Scripture, they could be shewn that Scripture is not for them,* that there is nothing common between them and Scripture.

"And pray remark, that all Christian societies, except the newly 'Reformed Churches,' have retained this manner of instructing. M. Claude and I said that the Greek Church, the Ethiopian, the Armenian, and others, were mistaken, indeed, in believing themselves the true Church; but all at least believe that there is nothing to examine after the true Church. There is no other manner of teaching the faithful. If we tell them that they may understand the Holy Scripture better than all the rest of the Church put together, we nourish pride, we take away docility; none says it, but the Churches which call themselves 'Reformed.' Everywhere else they say, as we do, that there is a true Church, which must be believed without examining after her: this is believed not only in the true Church, but also in those which imitate the true Church. The so-called 'Reformed' is the only Church which says it not. If the true Church, whichever she may be, says it, the pretended 'Reformed' is not then the true Church, because she says it not.

"Let them not tell us, 'The Ethiopian says it, the Greek says it, the Armenian says it, the Roman says it; which shall I believe?'

"If your doubt consisted in choosing between the Roman and the Greek, it would be necessary to enter into this examination. But now it is agreed in your religion, that the Greek Church, the Ethiopian, and the rest, are in the wrong against the Roman; and if they were true Churches, you ought (in leaving the Roman, which, as you say, was not such) to have sought communion with them. They are then not the true Church. No more are you: for the true Church believes that we must believe, without examining, what the true Church teaches. You teach the contrary. You call yourselves the true Church, and you say at the same time, that one must examine after you; which is to say, that one may incur damnation by believing you. You renounce then thenceforth the advantage of the true Church. You are not the true Church; it is a duty to quit you: it is here the beginning is to be made. Should any one, upon leaving you, be tempted to unite himself to the Greek Church, he will have his answer."

* Tertull. Præscrip. sec. 18, 37.

After Mademoiselle de Duras had heard these reasons, it seemed to me that nothing else could give her concern save the habit contracted from her infancy and the fear of afflicting her mother, for whom I knew she had all the tenderness and all the respect that such a mother deserves: I also saw she was concerned for the reproaches that were made her of having human designs, and especially of having delayed the doubting of her religion, until after a donation made her by her mother. "Your own conscience," said I to her, "best knows in what condition you were when this donation was made you; whether you had any doubt, and suppressed it in prospect of procuring yourself this advantage." "I did not so much as think of it," answered she. "You know then well," said I to her, "that this motive has not any part in what you do. Continue, therefore, in peace; provide for your salvation, and let men talk; for this apprehension, of being charged with human respects, is itself a sort of human respect, and that of the most refined and most to be feared."

She requested me to repeat in M. Coton's presence what had been said, through a desire that he should be instructed with her. He was sent for; we agreed on the facts. M. Coton, in an exceedingly mild manner, proposed some objections about the doctrine I had unfolded. I answered them; he told me he was not practised in discussion, nor versed in these matters. He said true; he reposed on M. Claude. I prayed God to enlighten him, and departed to return to my duty.

After another conversation which Mademoiselle de Duras and I had at St. Germain, in the Duchess of Richelieu's apartment, she told me that she believed herself in a condition to take her resolution within a little while, and that it only remained to pray God to conduct her well. The success was such as we wished. On the 22d of March, I returned to Paris to receive her abjuration; she made it in the Church of the Rev. Fathers of Christian Doctrine. The exhortation I made her had for its object, to represent to her that she was returning into the Church which her fathers had forsaken; that she would not henceforth believe herself more capable than the Church, more enlightened than the Church, and fuller of the Holy Ghost than the Church; that she would receive from the Church, without examining, the true sense of the Scripture as she received from the Church the Scripture itself; that she was henceforth going to build on the rock, and that her faith must fructify in good works. She felt the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and the congregation was edified by her good example.

REFLECTIONS

ON A

TREATISE BY M. CLAUDE.

I STATED, in my Preface to this book, that after M. Claude had read my recital, he drew up an answer to the INSTRUCTION I had given Mademoiselle De Duras, joining to it a Relation of our Conference, which he had drawn up, as he affirms in that writing, "on the day following our interview."

I have received from several places, and even from the remotest provinces, this Treatise of M. Claude's, with his Relation; but the most complete and most correct copy I have seen was communicated to me by the Duke of Chevreuse, who had it from a lady of quality of the Reformed religion. I have seen also, in the same Duke's hands, a declaration signed by M. Claude, in which he avows the whole writing; so that it cannot be doubted but it is his.

I find many things in this piece which manifestly confirm all that the reader has found in mine. It is not my intention here to notice all these things, nor to answer passages wherein M. Claude appears to me, through the weakness of his cause, as little in agreement with himself as with us. To make such remarks, the work must be in the hands of all people, so that every one may see whether the passages be truly related, and the sense and consecution well apprehended; in a word, it must be public. Its publication depends on M. Claude. In the meantime I will make some reflections on things about which I think he cannot disagree, and which may very much assist the "Reformed" to take a good resolution on the matter we have treated.

My first reflection is upon the answer made by M. Claude to the acts extracted out of the "Discipline" of his Churches. I made use of these acts to show, that it was so necessary for all private persons to submit, in questions on faith, to the

Church's infallible authority, that the Reformed, who rejected it in speculation, were at the same time forced to acknowledge it in practice. What is most stringent in these acts is, that to the National Synod alone—to the exclusion of Consistories, Colloquies, and Provincial Synods—is attributed "the ultimate and final resolution, by God's word."* But, because this is "the ultimate and final resolution," the Churches and provinces sending deputies to this synod swear solemnly "to submit to whatever shall be concluded in that assembly, being persuaded that God will preside in it by his Holy Spirit and by his word."† Thus, because they believe an entire submission due to this supreme sentence when it shall be pronounced, they swear to it before it is given: this is acting consistently. But if, after a promise confirmed by so solemn an oath, they still claim a liberty to examine, I confess I know not what words signify, and there never was any mental evasion so deceptive and equivocating.

It will readily be believed, without my saying it, that the ministers find themselves pressed by so clear an argument. On such occasions, where the truth manifests itself with so much evidence, the difficulty becomes, in proportion to each one's intelligence, the more perceptible,—the more each one finds himself embarrassed. And thus there is nothing more discernible than the perplexity evinced in M. Claude's answer,—even that answer he himself sets down in his Relation.

He is reduced to say, that they make this oath, because one ought to presume well of such an assembly; and moreover, that these words, "We swear to submit to your assembly, being persuaded that God will preside in it," include a condition, without which the promise thus sworn has not its effect. This is all that can be answered. The anonymous,‡ who dedicated his book to M. Conrart, first made me this answer. Another anonymous writer, whose book is entitled "Disguise Unmasked," made it after him. M. Noguier, and M. De Brueia, another author that has answered the *EXPOSITION*, had no more to say. M. Jurieu kept to this answer in his "Preservative;" save that he explains more simply than the rest, that all this *persuasion*, which serves for a ground to the *oath*, is "a clause of civility, the terms whereof must not be abused." M. Claude had no other reply, and this is the only one which still appears in his Relation.

* Discip. chap. v., art. xxxi.

† Ibid. chap. ix., art. iii.

‡ M. de la Bastide.—See the Introduction to the new edition of the *Exposition*.

THIS, this serious and solemn oath of all our Reformed, and their Churches in a body, to their National Synod, is reduced to this proposition, which would be at bottom but a sorry compliment: "We swear before God to submit to all that you shall decide, if you decide by his word, as we presume and hope you will."

But then, for what reason is not this notable oath pronounced in these terms, if not for this, that they well saw that adopting such terms would be saying nothing, and they would say or seem to say, something?

For my part, the more I consider what is said in the "Disciplinae" of the Reformed concerning this oath of the Churches, the farther I find it from the sense they would give it.

I find, first, as I observed in the Conference, that this oath is made only for the National Synod—that is, for the synod "in which the ultimate and final resolution is to be made by God's word." And the National Synod of Castres has declared, "that there should not be used, in the letters of mission brought by the deputies of particular Churches to the Colloquies and Provincial Synods, such absolute clauses of submission as are inserted in the letters of the provinces to the National Synod." Why, if not to show the difference there is between the ultimate decision and all the rest? Indeed, upon examining in what this difference consisted, I found another sort of submission for the Colloquies and Provincial Synods. It is, that those who are accused of altering the sound doctrine are antecedently obliged "to make an express promise, not to disseminate any of their opinions before the meeting of the Colloquy or the Provincial Synod."* It is a rule of discipline and policy; but when they come to the synod in which this last and final resolution is to be made, the parties reiterate indeed the same promise, but they do not stop there; the Churches in a body add this solemn oath of submitting entirely to the decision, being persuaded that God himself will be the author of it. A "bare human presumption," as M. Claude calls it—a "clause of civility," as M. Jurieu styles it, cannot be the matter and foundation of an oath. Accordingly, we find that not only private persons, but also consistories and whole provinces perceived in this oath something stronger than they will at present let us understand; insomuch that they made a great resistance against it, which it required a considerable time and the reiterated decrees of National Synods to overcome.

* Discipl. c. v. art. 81.

I observe this resistance continued until the year 1631. In this year, and before, I find almost continually in the National Synods whole provinces censured because their deputation, or, as they term it, their "missive," had not this clause of submission. The Churches were with difficulty brought to make an oath so little agreeable to the doctrine which had been inspired into them, and to swear, against the principles of the new reformation, such a submission to an assembly which, after all, whatever name might be given it, was but an assembly of men (according to their principles) ever liable to mistake. To that issue, however, they were fain to come. It was clear that nothing was done, unless men were finally obliged to an absolute submission, and that to leave them liberty to examine, after the last and final resolution, was to nourish pride, dissension, schism. Thus, against the principles of the new Reformation, were they fain to give other ideas, and it was resolved to insist unalterably on the submission and oath in the terms we have noted. The reason used by the Synod of Rochelle to oblige the provinces to this clause of submission to such things as should be resolved in the National Synod is, that it was "necessary to the validity of the assembly's conclusions."* In general, to render the acts of an assembly valid, it would be sufficient for those of whom it should be composed to have a power of bringing to it the suffrages of those that send them; and the deputies of the Colloquies as of the Provincial Synods, came always furnished with such powers. But there was something stronger required for the National Synod; and since the ultimate resolution was to be made, to render such an act valid, and give it all its force, it was thought necessary it should be preceded by a submission as absolute as the resolution ought to appear irrevocable.

To this decision of the Synod of Rochelle, that of Tonneins added, that "the submission should be promised in proper terms to all that should be concluded and decreed, without condition and modification."† Now, this is nothing but a "clause of civility," and a conditional promise, that might be made, at discretion, not only to the Provincial Synods, to the Colloquy and Consistory, but also to every particular minister. Nevertheless, they never make it to those particular ministers, nor to this Consistory, nor to these Colloquies, nor to these Provincial Synods. Why so, but to reserve something peculiar and proper to the assembly, where the final resolution is to be made, after which there remains nothing but to obey? But if all that is here particular

* *Discipl. c. ix. art. 3.*

† *Ibid.*

and proper be, at the bottom, only words, was this worth employing the Churches of the new Reformation, and five or six of their National Synods? This is what they ought to clear up, if they would say any thing; yet they speak not one word about it, although it is a difficulty which at once meets the eye, and I have expressly pointed it out.

In fine, to reduce my argument to a few words: every oath ought to be founded on a certain and known truth. Now this promise made to the National Synod, and confirmed by the solemn oath of all the Reformed Churches—"We swear and promise to follow your decisions, being persuaded that you will judge aright"—this promise, I say, turn it which way you will, has no certainty but in one of these two senses. The *first*: "We swear and promise to follow your decisions, if we find you judge aright:" a thing indeed very certain, but at the same time illusory; since there is no person on earth to whom one may not say as much, and, as I observed in the Conference, M. Claude may say so to me, and I to him. The *second*: "We are so persuaded you will judge aright, that we swear and promise to follow your decisions:" in which case the oath is false, if we be not thoroughly assured that the assembly it is made to cannot judge amiss. All the pretended Reformed have now to do is, to choose which they will of these two senses, one of which is a manifest illusion, and the other, which seems the only natural sense, clearly supposes the Church's infallibility. Nor must they answer here, that this submission respects only public order and discipline; for in matters of faith, a decision obliges to nothing less than what the apostle St. Paul says—"to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth."* And our Reformed themselves understand it so, when they declare in their "Discipline," that the effect of this their National Synod's ultimate and final decision is, "the acquiescing therein, point by point, with an express disowning of the contrary doctrine."† He, then, who swears to submit to a decision that shall be made in an assembly, swears to believe with his heart and confess with his mouth the doctrine which shall be there decided. But in order to make, and confirm with an oath, such a promise, it is requisite the assembly it is made to should have a divine promise of being assisted by the Holy Ghost; that is, that it should be infallible. At the Conference, M. Claude insinuated that there was in fact a divine promise, that those who sought should find, and that the oath of his churches might be grounded on this assurance. But this answer will not extricate him from the

* Rom. x. 10.

† See Note B.

difficulty. For, to render the oath conformable to the promise, it must be conditional, as the promise is; and as Jesus Christ said, "if you seek well, you shall find," the sense of the oath would also be, "if you do your duty, we will believe you," which would be to fall again into the pitiful illusion we have rejected. To the end, then, that the oath we treat of may be made without rashness, it must be founded on an absolute promise from God; on a promise which secures us against the infidelities of men; on a promise, in short, such as Jesus Christ makes his Church when he indefinitely and absolutely assures her "that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."* As long as our Reformed shall persist in denying that the authority of the Church's decisions is founded on this promise, their oath will always be an illusion or a manifest extravagance; and they will find themselves forced either to defer to the Church's authority, more than they are willing, or to acknowledge that they have by fine words imposed on the people's credulity: since after their having distinguished the Church's final decision from all the rest, by so remarkable a character and the protestation of so special a submission, it will be found in the bottom that this submission, confirmed by so singular an oath, is of no other nature or kind than such as is naturally due to all ecclesiastical assemblies and every lawful pastor: that is, one may always pass from it to new doubts, and still examine after the ultimate resolution, as after all the rest.

It is so, indeed, according to the principles of the new Reformation; but the principles of the new Reformation have not been able to change the necessary condition of human nature, which, for the hindering of divisions and quieting of men's minds, requires a final decision, independent of all new examination, either general or particular.

The Christian Church is not exempt from this law; and the more regular she is, the more her constitution depends on an entire submission of mind, the more need she has of such an authority. And therefore, from the very beginning of Christianity, God himself has put in the hearts of all true Christians, that they must no longer search nor examine after the Church has determined. This inviolable tradition has wrought its effect on the Reformed, in spite of their principles: nor do I wonder at it. St. Basil† has very wisely and very truly observed, that

* Matt. xvi. 18.

† [Οὐτως, οἶμαι, τὸ εἰς παραδόντες ἰσχυρὸν ἔνθα πολλὰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας αὐτῶν δόξασιν ἀντιλεῖν. De Spir. Sancto, ch. 29, tom. iii. 61, ed. Ben.]

tradition made men speak more than they would, and inspired them with things contrary to their sentiments. And if our Reformed will not confess themselves indebted to tradition for this ultimate and final resolution, and this submission so solemnly sworn, it is then necessity and experience that has forced them to it; it is because an end must be put to the doubts and examinations of private persons by an absolute authority, in order to have peace and uphold humility; it is because if this authority be not exercised, they must make a show of possessing and exercising it, and at least give the idea of it; it is, in a word, because one may indeed discourse and answer arguments by words; but the ignorance, infirmity, and pride, natural to the human mind, require other remedies.

In the Conference, I undertook to show, that by denying the Church's infallible authority, one falls into these two difficulties; and I say not into one of the two, but inevitably into both of them. The *first* is, that every particular person, how ignorant soever he may be, is obliged to believe that he understands the Scripture better than the most universal synods and all the rest of the Church together. The *second*, that there is a time when a baptized Christian is not in condition to make an act of faith upon the Holy Scripture; but that, whether he will or not, he shall find himself obliged to doubt whether it be inspired by God.

I have not met with any one of the Reformed religion who has not shuddered at the two propositions, and who has not told me that, far from ever believing them himself, he should detest those who should. Let us see, then, how it continues fixed by the Conference, that they are consequences of the Reformed doctrine, and such manifest consequences, that they are owned by the ministers.

And indeed, to go no further than M. Claude's Relation, he himself asserts in it, that after all ecclesiastical assemblies, every particular person ought to examine whether they have rightly understood God's word or not. When he had spoken of human interests, which often, as he said, darken the truth in the most authentic and most universal assemblies of the Church; I, to destroy this answer, and show that it was at bottom a mere cavil, asked him, whether, supposing all to pass orderly, and without the appearance of any human interest in the deliberations, every private person must not still examine? He acknowledged he must; and he avows it still in his own Relation, maintaining that there is no absurdity, no pride, in a private person's believing that he may understand God's word better than any ecclesiasti-

cal assemblies, however orderly held, and of whatsoever persons composed.

Here is a proposition and doctrine that will appear hideous to every teachable temper: but, to make the matter more evident, let us apply this doctrine to a particular example. The Calvinistic Church, during the six score or seven score years which have elapsed since her first establishment, has held no assembly more authentic or more solemn than the Synod of Dort.* Besides all the Churches of the Low Countries, all the rest of the same belief—that of England, that of Geneva, those of the Palatinate, those of Hesse, those of Switzerland, that of Bremen, and the rest of the German language, were there by their deputies, and received it; and to the end nothing might be wanting to it, if the Reformed Churches of France were hindered from being present at it, they adopted all its doctrine in the National Synod of Charenton, in 1631, where all the articles of Dort, translated verbatim, were embraced and sworn to by the whole synod, and afterwards by all the provinces and all the particular Churches. Since that time none of the “Reform” has protested against this synod. The Arminians alone who were then condemned, blame its doctrine, and talk of its cabals, and the share which policy and the interests the house of Orange had in it. All else have yielded; and if there be any thing that can be said to have been received with an unanimous consent by all the Churches of the “Reformed,” it is, without doubt, the decrees of this synod. And nevertheless, I will maintain that M. Claude, being asked whether any private person whatever of his Church may rely upon an authority so great amongst them as this is, without examining any further, if he be pressed to answer positively, Yea or No, to so precise a question, and on a fact so well circumstantiated, must say No; and that, in fine, notwithstanding all this, they were but men—how able, how enlightened, how holy soever they are imagined—still subject to fail, to follow whose sentiments blindfold and without examining, would be to equal men to God.

Thus, according to the maxims of the new Reformation, every private person, even to the most ignorant woman, ought to believe that he can understand the Holy Scripture better than an assembly composed of all that is great in that whole Church which he acknowledges to be the only one where God is purely served; and not only better than this assembly, but than all the rest of the Church, and than all that he knows in the whole universe. This is what M. Claude has acknowledged to me;

* [A. 1618. See Note C.]

it is, in substance, what he still says in his own Relation; and it is what every minister, whether he will or not, shall own in a Conference, in presence of any company that he shall desire, unless he obstinately resolve not to answer positively; in which case he will be seen to shuffle, and this tergiversation will be stronger than an acknowledgment, since, besides showing the acknowledgment to be inevitable, it will also show him to be sensible of its pernicious consequences.

And what I say of the Synod of Dort, M. Claude and every other minister will be forced to say of the Council of Nice, of the Council of Constantinople, of that of Ephesus, of that of Chalcedon, and of the rest, which we and they receive with common accord; and when they shall say it, they will say nothing new or unusual in their religion. Calvin has said it in formal terms. When speaking in general of all the councils of preceding ages, he writes as follows: "I do not mean hereby to assert, that all the councils must be condemned, and all their decrees annulled: nevertheless," proceeds he, "you will object to me that I so order them as to permit every one indifferently to receive or reject what the councils may have established: by no means, that is not my meaning." One would suppose that he was very far from it. The majesty of councils and the authority of a great name move him at first; but the course of his doctrine makes him soon forget what he seemed willing to say to their advantage; for see how he concludes:—"When," says he "the authority of a council is alleged, I desire first, it be considered at what time, and for what cause, it was assembled, and what persons assisted at it; next, that the principal point be examined according to the rule of Scripture, so that the council's definition have its weight, and be as a presumption, but be no bar to examination."* Such is the issue of all this careful inquiry after time, matter, and persons: that, at what time soever a council is held, what matter soever is there treated, and of what persons soever it is composed, every one without exception—for that was the question—should examine the principal point by the word of God, and believe he can understand the divine word better than all councils.

Such is the extreme to which these religionists push examination: they push it even much farther, since they will have one examine after the Apostles. This is not a consequence which I draw from their doctrine; it is their own very proposition and doctrine in formal terms, and particularly that of M. Claude. For, I having observed in the EXPOSITION† that after the Coun-

* Calvin, iv. Inst. cap. 9.

† Sec. xix.

cil of Jerusalem, and the decision of the Apostles wherein they said, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,"* no one had any thing more to examine; and that, in fact, Paul and Barnabas, with Silas, as it is written in the Acts,† went through the Churches, teaching them (not to examine what the Apostles had done, but) to keep the decrees they had ordained; and having thence inferred that they gave the form to all following ages, and taught us how at all times the faithful ought to submit to the Church's decisions without examining:—after several answers, all of them frivolous, they were fain at last to answer me clearly, that one ought yet to examine after the Apostles. It is the anonymous‡ writer, who was the first to answer the Exposition, who speaks to this effect, in the following terms:—"It does not appear that the Apostles published their decisions with an absolute order for their being obeyed: but they sent Paul, Barnabas, and Silas, to instruct the faithful to keep this ordinance; that is, evidently, to impress them with the motives and grounds of it; which does not imply that they were forbidden to examine."

This is what the anonymous says; the passage is a remarkable one: you will find it in the 19th article of the first answer, in the fourth and last observation he makes on the Council of the Apostles, page 388. This is not a notion peculiar to this author, since there stands in the front of his book the approbation of the four ministers of Charenton, of whom M. Claude is one; so that it cannot be said that I charge him with a doctrine which is not his, in imputing to him that of this anonymous writer.

So, it is not the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, it is the faithful, the Christian Churches, that ought to examine after the Apostles, and after the Apostles assembled, and after they have pronounced, "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us;" and this monstrous doctrine is taught in a Church, which vaunts of hearing nothing but the pure words of the Apostles. To such extremes are the ministers and the "Reformed," and particularly M. Claude, forced by their belief to drive the necessity of examination.

It only remained to say, we must examine even after Jesus Christ, and that with all his miracles, and all the authority given him by his Father, he had not enough to oblige men to follow him on his word, and without examining. M. Claude said it in our Conference, and says it again in his Relation.

I beg to assure the discerning reader that, in a matter of this importance, it is my intention neither to make false allegations

* Acts xv. 18.

† Ibid. xvi. 4.

‡ [M. de la Bastide.]

nor to exaggerate. Let him but follow me with attention, and he shall see the truth plainly appear.

It has been seen how, in the Conference, I objected, that unless a living and speaking authority were acknowledged, with an obligation on the part of every private person to submit thereunto without examining, private persons would be brought to the presumption of believing they could understand the Holy Scripture better than all the councils together, and than all the rest of the church. To prove that there was nothing so presumptuous or absurd in this, M. Claude answered me by saying, that at the time when Jesus Christ was upon earth, the case had happened when it was the duty of a private person to raise his own judgment above that of the synagogue assembled, which condemned Jesus Christ; and that this, far from being a sentiment of pride, was the act of a perfect faith.*

This answer, I confess, struck me with horror: for, to make it good, one must say, that at the time when the synagogue judged Jesus Christ, and he himself was on earth, there was not upon earth any living or speaking authority, to which men were obliged to submit without examining; so that one ought to examine after Jesus Christ, and it was not allowable to believe him on his word. I made this answer to M. Claude, and showed him, that far from there then being a necessity of every one's determining himself by a particular examination, and setting himself above every living and speaking authority, there was at that time one, the greatest that ever was, or could be, namely, that of Jesus Christ and truth itself, to whom the Father bore witness by a voice from heaven, by the greatest and most visible miracles that ever were wrought; and in fine, by the most resplendent, as well as the most certain means Divine Omnipotence could make use of.

If I observe, in the Conference,† that there was no reply made to this argument, it is very apparent that in effect there ought to be none. M. Claude, nevertheless, in his Relation, says he answered me, that Jesus Christ's miracles constituted one of the points in dispute; that there are false miracles which Moses in Deuteronomy‡ charged the Israelites to take heed of; that the synagogue had judged Jesus Christ's miracles to be done in the name of Beelzebub; that "in fine, an authority decides nothing, until it be first received, and that of Jesus Christ was not so as yet, since it was in dispute, whether they should receive it or reject it." I owe it to myself to observe, that assuredly I heard nothing of all this in the Conference;

* *Supra*, page 39.

† Page 41.

‡ Deut. xiii.

and the reader will presently see that it were better be silent than to speak thus. But since M. Claude avers that he did so, he must then also say, that because Jesus Christ's miracles were rejected as deceitful signs by the envious, by the obstinate—in one word, by the declared enemies of the truth, these miracles were not sufficiently convincing to oblige men to believe Jesus Christ on his word, without examining further; and that, for example, after he had raised Lazarus, in express testimony that God had sent him,* those who were even eye-witnesses to so great a miracle were, I do not say permitted, but expressly obliged to examine whether Jesus Christ were sent by God. He must, I say, carry the necessity of the examination to this excess: otherwise it will be true, as I observed, that there was then a visible and palpable authority to which every one ought to submit, without examining; so that there was never any time, when men were less exposed to the temptation of pride, by exalting themselves above all living and speaking authority, since Jesus Christ, the most living and speaking authority, as well as the greatest and most infallible that ever was, was then on earth, and men preferred themselves before the synagogue, only for the purpose of submitting to Jesus Christ, whose miracles, as himself said, took away all excuse from those that believed not in him:† this the assembly that condemned him knew so well, that they found no other answer to his miracles, nor any other means to resist him, but to make away with him and also with Lazarus,‡ to stifle, if they could, at once with the miracles they had seen, the memory of him who wrought them. Frivolous answers must not be put forth to blind people on this matter: nor should irrelevant questions be introduced to make the reader lose the train of an argument;—I mean, that it is to no purpose to start the question concerning delusive signs, nor to answer, that the synagogue doubted of the truth of Jesus Christ's miracles. Our sole business is to ascertain whether this doubt was not the effect of evident malice, and in fine, whether it be not certain amongst Christians that there was in Jesus Christ's miracles so full a demonstration of the Divine power, and so clear a confirmation of Jesus Christ's mission, that every reasonable mind was bound to yield without any further examination; so that there was then a living and speaking authority, to which there was nothing to be opposed but gross ignorance and manifest obstinacy. That is the point: and if, after this explication of the question, they think still to escape by saying, with M. Claude, “that Jesus Christ's authority was not received,” they must go further,

* John xi. 42.

† John xv. 22, et seq.

‡ Ibid. xi. 53; xii. 10.

and say to Jesus Christ himself, with the Jews : "Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true." Then we will answer with Jesus Christ : "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true."* And again : "I am not alone, but my Father that sent me, he also beareth witness of me;" and again : "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me : " and, in fine : "They have no cloak for their sin ; if I had not done among them the works which no other man hath done, they had not had sin, but they have both seen and hated both me and my Father."† The meaning is, that the miracles are clear ; that the authority is incontestable ; and that the impugning of him can have no other ground than a blind hatred.

I expect still to be told, that Jesus Christ added after all this : "Search the Scriptures, they are they which testify of me ;" and to hear it boldly inferred from this text, that one might and should examine after Jesus Christ ; so that this saying he uttered shows us (not a superabundance of conviction in the Scripture, but) an insufficiency of authority in the person of Jesus Christ. If they make yet this objection, we have nothing to do but to hold our peace, and leave Jesus Christ to defend his own cause.

Meanwhile, we shall conclude that it is the authority of Jesus himself that we revere in his Church. If we say the Church must be believed without examining, it is because Jesus Christ, who teaches and guides her, is above all examination. We shall not forbear to say also, after the example of Jesus Christ, to all the enemies of the Church, for their superabundant conviction,—“Search the Scriptures.” We shall confound them by this Scripture, which they say they believe, and we shall see them also succumb in this examination ; but it will be after we have forced them to acknowledge, that men must submit, without examining, to the authority of the Church, in which that Spirit whom Jesus Christ has sent to hold his place always speaks.

There is, then, nothing less to the purpose than the example of the synagogue ; and our so-styled Reformed, when this example, which was their main stay, is withdrawn from them, continue alone to believe themselves, each one in particular, capable of understanding the Scriptures better than whatsoever in the universe has authority to interpret it and to judge of doctrine, better than all the faithful that are before their eyes in the world ; which is just the error of the Independents, or something worse. It will be said, that this private person, who examines after the

* John viii. 13—16.

† Ibid. v. 36 ; xv. 22, 24.

Church, will always be well assured of not being alone in his sentiment, since there will always remain some hidden chosen one who will think as he does: as if (without refuting this dream) it were not a sufficiently detestable pride to set himself alone above all that is seen or heard to speak in the whole Church beside. It will be said still: It is no pride to believe oneself enlightened by the Holy Ghost. But on the contrary, it is the height of pride, that particular persons should believe the Holy Ghost will instruct them, and leave in error all the faithful that appear in the rest of the Church. Nor is it to any purpose to answer, as M. Claude does in his Relation, "that the Spirit breatheth where he will:"* for they must show that this Spirit, who resteth on the humble, fails not to breathe on those who believe themselves alone more capable of understanding the Scripture, than all the rest of the Church, since they examine after her; and not only to breathe upon them, but Himself also to inspire them with this proud thought. But, in fine, be this as it may, and without disputing any farther, since this is no place for it,—we have shown that it is a doctrine acknowledged in the new Reformation, that every particular person ought to examine after the Church, and consequently ought to believe that he may happen to understand the Scripture better than the Church and all her assemblies. Those whom such presumption revolts, or who, upon examination, do not find in themselves this false capacity, have nothing to do but to seek their salvation in another Church than that in which so monstrous a doctrine is professed.

The second absurdity I promised to make M. Claude and every sound Protestant avow is, that, unless there be acknowledged in the Church an authority after which there must be no more examining or doubting, one must inevitably suppose a point of time in which the believer, after he has reached the age of reason, cannot make an act of faith upon the Scripture, and in which consequently, he must doubt whether it be true or false. I assigned for this point of doubt all the time in which a Christian, for what cause soever, has not read the Holy Scripture. M. Claude here protests against so detestable a proposition. However, I do still maintain, that he not only owned it in the Conference, but also that, whatever ingenuity he may have exerted at present, he has not been able to escape admitting it even in his Relation.

To say truth, this is one of the passages in which I least recognize what we really said at the time. But there is still

* John iii. 8.

enough to convict him : since, if this Relation becomes public, it will be found that he here acknowledges, in express terms, *“ that he, who has not yet read the Holy Scripture, believes it to be God’s word, with a human faith, because his father told him so, which is the state of a catechumen ; and when he has himself read this book, and felt the efficacy of it, he believes it to be God’s word, no longer with a human faith, because his father told him so, but with a divine faith, because he has himself felt its divinity immediately, and this is the state of a believer.”* It is then true, that he has acknowledged that point of time I undertook to show, when a baptized Christian is not in a condition to make an act of supernatural and divine faith upon the Holy Scripture, since he believes it to be God’s word only by a human faith, and divine faith cannot come until after the reading of it.

Howsoever he may turn this human faith, it is a horrible thing that a baptized Christian, who has come to the age of reason, cannot make upon the Scripture, an act of that faith by which we are Christians. For, thence it follows, that a Christian who is about to read the Scripture for the first time, ought neither to be inclined of himself nor to be induced by any other to say, on opening the book—*“ As I believe that God is, I believe that the Scripture I am going to read is his word.”* On the contrary, he should be taught to say—*“ I am going to examine, whether henceforth, during the rest of my life, I ought to read this Scripture with such a faith.”* This is overthrowing the whole order of instruction ; this is losing the fruit of baptism ; this is leading Christians to instruct their baptized children as if they were not baptized, and had yet to deliberate of what religion they should be.

And what M. Claude says concerning the Scripture, the same he must say regarding the faith of the Trinity, and that of the Incarnation, and that of Jesus Christ’s mission and the redemption of mankind. For, that which forces M. Claude and every Protestant to say that the believer who has not read the Holy Scripture, can believe it only with a human faith to be inspired by God, is, that otherwise, they must acknowledge an act of divine faith on the Church’s sole authority, which would be to own this authority as infallible, and ruin the very foundation of all the new Reformation. But the same argument recurs upon all the articles of our faith ; and if the faithful can assent with a divine faith to the Trinity, and the Incarnation, and the mission of Jesus Christ, on the sole authority of the Church, and before he has read the Holy Scripture, I shall still conclude with equal certainty that the Church’s authority will be infallible. As a sequel, then, of M. Claude’s principle—the principle of all Pro-

testants—we must, in reducing Christians about to read the Holy Scripture to a bare human faith concerning the Scripture, reduce them at once to the like on the most essential articles of our belief.

Such was not the method of our forefathers. It was not thus that they taught Christians to instruct their children. When they baptized them in their infancy, *Credo*, “I believe,” was said in the name of the children by their sponsors. No matter though our “Reformed”* have changed this form, it descends from primitive antiquity, and will be always holy and venerable, whatever they may do or say. But this form used towards children shows us that, when they shall have the use of reason, they must be immediately taught to make an act of faith, and no time must be lost in exciting them to it. Then they will be capable of it; they may say the same creed they would have said if they had been baptized when come to the use of reason; and to reduce them to a barely human faith is to take from them the grace of their baptism, and justify the practice as well as the doctrine of the Anabaptists.

And I entreat the professors of the “Reformed” religion not to suppose that I here allege the Anabaptists,† by way of exaggeration, or to render *them* odious; such methods are not becoming Christians. I strictly maintain that the doctrine taught here by M. Claude, and which all Protestants must teach with him, introduces Anabaptism. For, if the acts of divine faith must be held in suspense until such time as one has read the Holy Scripture, and be instructed by himself; if all the acts that precede this instruction be not acts of Christians, because having for their foundation only a human faith, for the same reason baptism must be deferred until that time, and we must not make Christians that at the age of reason are incapable of producing acts of their religion.

It is in vain for M. Claude to answer us that he will produce the same argument in respect of the Church as we allege against him in respect of Scripture; for, in order to do this, as we show him a point of time which, even after the age of reason has been reached, necessarily precedes the reading of the Scripture, he must also be able to show us one that precedes the Church’s instructions: but this he will never find. Do what he will, we shall always mark him a point of time before the reading of the Scripture, which is that when the Church puts it into our hands;

* French Calvinists.—In the baptism service of the Protestant Church of England, the distinct profession of the creed is made by the sponsors.

† The unchristian and anti-social doctrines abetted by these sectaries may be seen in Mosheim (Cent. xvi. ch. 3), or Möhler’s Symbolik (479—482).

but before the Church there is nothing,—she obviates all our doubts by her instructions.

It is an error to imagine that we must always examine before we believe. The happiness of those who are born, as I may say, in the bosom of the true Church is, that God has given her such an authority that we believe at once what she proposes, and that faith precedes, or rather excludes, examination.

To ask now by what motive God makes us sensible of his Church's authority, is manifestly to depart from the question. He has abundant motives to fasten his children to his Church—a Church to which he has given marked and luminous characters. This very fact, that of all the societies in the world, she is the sole, to whom no one can show her beginning or any interruption of her visible and outward state, by any averred fact, whilst she shows all other societies that environ her theirs, by facts which themselves cannot deny : this very thing is a sensible character, that gives an inviolable authority to the true Church. God has abundant motives to make his children perceive this so marked a character of his Church. But be these motives what they may, and not to detail them here—because this is not the place to detail them,—it is certain that there *are* such motives ; because, after all, we must be able to believe on the Church's word before we have read the Holy Scripture ; and because in the first instruction we receive, no mention being made of Scripture, we are taught to say, as a fundamental act of our faith, “ I believe the Catholic Church.”

M. Claude tells us, that to authorize the method by which we pretend to lay the Church's faith as the foundation of all the rest, the creed should have begun with saying, “ I believe the Church,” whereas, it begins with saying, “ I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” He does advert to the fact, that it is the Church herself which teaches us the *whole* creed, and it is on her word we say, “ I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son ;” and the rest ; which we cannot say with a firm faith, unless God at the same time puts it in our hearts, that the Church which teaches us deceives us not. After, then, we have on her word said, “ I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost,” and begun our profession of faith by the divine persons, whom their majesty places above all, we add a holy reflection on the Church which proposes this belief to us, and say, “ I believe the Catholic Church ;” to which we immediately join all the graces we receive by her ministry, “ the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the blessed resurrection,” and, in fine, “ everlasting life.”

It is embarrassing the controversy with extraneous topics to allege here, as M. Claude does, the Greek Church, the Armenian, the Egyptian or Ethiopian, and that of the Copts, and so many others which, equally with the Roman, put forward the claim to be the true Church. It is said :—those who are bred up in these Churches revere their authority ; every one of these Churches has followers as zealous as ours. True and pure zeal has no discernible characteristic : every one attributes his, as we do, to the grace of the Holy Ghost, and resting on the authority of the Church in which he is, says that the Holy Ghost makes use of this authority to guide him to the belief of the Scripture and all the verities of Christianity.

This is, in a manner, M. Claude's objection ; and thus it is that sometimes when men cannot disentangle themselves, they endeavor to entoil others in the same perplexity as their own. But he will gain nothing by this manœuvre ; for, in fact, what cause does he pretend to combat for ? Is it for indifferency of religions ? Will he say, with abandoned men, that there is no true Church in which divine impulses really act ? And will he, under pretence that the devil, or, if he please, nature, can imitate, or, to say better, counterfeit these impulses,—will he maintain that they are every where imaginary ? God forbid ; we both of us wish to avoid this rock. He will avow then with me, that there is a true Church, which soever it be ; a Church in which the Holy Ghost acts ; though looking only to the exterior we cannot always so easily discern who those are in whom he dwells. Up to this point we are agreed. Let us see now how far we can go together. We agree that there is one true Church, in which the Holy Ghost acts ; we agree that he makes use of outward means to put the truth in our hearts ; we agree that he makes use of the Church and of the Scripture. Our question is, to know by which he begins ; whether by the Scripture or by the Church ; whether, I say, he makes us believe the Church by the Scripture, or rather makes us believe the Scripture by the Church ? I say that the Holy Ghost begins by the Church ; and it must be so, since it is manifestly the Church that puts the Scripture in our hands. It is at this point, however, that M. Claude quits me, and begins to walk alone ; but he falls at the very first step into a precipice. For, his fear of acknowledging an infallible authority in the true Church, and of believing that on her word we may make an act of divine and supernatural faith concerning the Scripture, obliges him to say that it is not possible to begin the reading of the Holy Scripture by such an act of faith, and that every act of faith which precedes this reading is an act of human faith. To this deplorable pass he

brings a Christian at his first going to read the Holy Scripture. M. Claude cannot rise out of this abyss without returning to the place where he began to leave me, and saying afterwards with me, that there is a true Church, wheresoever she be, the veneration of which the Holy Ghost first inspires into true believers; that by this veneration, which he at first puts in their hearts, he fixes them to the Scripture which this Church presents them; that this Church requires also of all those she can instruct that they upon her word adore the infallible truth of this Scripture, and does not acknowledge for her children those who have only a human faith for it.

But, say they, the "Roman" Church is not the only one which attributes to herself this authority; the Greek and other Churches will have one believe them on their word. These Churches teach that this is the means to read the Holy Scripture with the submission of divine faith. Well, if it be so, it remains only to choose between these Churches. But then at once, at a single stroke, the Calvinistic Church is fallen; she degrades herself, as I may say, from the title of Church, since she finds not in herself authority enough to cause all those whom she begins to instruct to make an act of a Christian, and an act of divine faith, not even on the truth of the Scripture; whence it is supposed she ought to learn all the rest.

But M. Claude asks, how one shall choose between the Churches? Shall it be by enthusiasm? It would be by enthusiasm, as I observed in the Conference,* if the true Church had not her characteristics that distinguish her from others. Without going further, or entering into long investigations, I say she has her *succession*, any interruption, innovation, or change in which, no one can ever prove against her by any positive fact. This is a characteristic, which no false Church can so clearly glory of as the true; because by glorying of it she would visibly condemn herself. There will be then always, in the instruction which the true Church will give her children concerning her condition, something that no other sect can or dare say. It is by this we would convict, if it were needful, the Greeks, the Ethiopians, the Armenians, and other sects, which seem in this respect more deceiving, because of the appearance of succession that they show; which also enables them to claim for themselves somewhat more plausibly the authority of the Church. But as for the Calvinistic Church, there is an end of her at once, because she has not so much as an apparent and colorable succession, and does not, as we have now shown by M. Claude's

* Page 46.

acknowledgment, attribute to herself this authority, without which there can neither be any certain instruction, nor any assured foundation of divine faith,—nor, in fine, any Church.

It would then be an unprofitable waste of time for us here to discuss, with the Egyptians and Greeks, the succession of which they boast. It would be no great labor to show them the exact moment of their innovation; the pretended Reformed know it as well as we, and do themselves show it them when they please. So, when they press us to do it, it is not because they believe they give us an impossible, or even an obscure and difficult task, but it is, in a word, because, with a cause so bad as theirs is, some advantage is found in shifting the question and diverting the reader from the train of an argument.

Thus, I had reason to tell Mademoiselle de Duras, in one of the instructions of this book, that if any one disgusted with the Calvinistic Church were tempted to embrace the religion of the Copts, or of the Greeks, it would *then* be time enough to show them in these Churches that certain period of their novelty, which they can no more deny than can other sects; but that since the Calvinists, with whom we have to do, admitted this, and since no one thinks of leaving them but to come to us,—when we obliged any one to leave them, by showing, from their minister's own confession, the enormous absurdities of their doctrine, the work was done, and all the rest on that occasion would be to no purpose. And let the reader consider the method of the Conference, and the state of the question which is there treated. The direct aim of the Conference was not to establish the Roman Church, but only to show there is somewhere or other a true Church, to which we must submit without examining; and further, that this cannot be the Calvinistic Church, since she will herself have one examine after her, which makes her acknowledge the absurdities we have remarked, and by this acknowledgment lose the title of Church.

This done, there is no further need of recommending the Roman Church—that is, *that Church or body of believers whereof Rome is the head*; because whosoever wishes to choose between two Churches, and finds one disproved, finds the other established, and there is no need of disputing further. Besides that the Roman Church so evidently bears these luminous characters of the true Church, that scarce any man of good sense, even amongst our Reformed, but agrees that, *if* there be in this world an authority to which we must submit, it is that of *this* Church.

At all events, when one sees the absurdities he is forced to own in Calvinism, for want of having acknowledged in the

Church's authority the true principles of Christian instruction, he soon withdraws from a Church whose method and instruction is so manifestly defective, and a man is sufficiently solicited, by the remnant of Christianity which he feels within himself, to return to the Church which he quitted.

We see, in M. Claude's discourses, that, pressed by this want of authority which ruins all instruction in his Church, he affects to make our dispute wholly turn upon the instruction of children, and thinks he has found an advantage by making this instruction depend on parents and nurses, who are better known at that age than the Church and her ministers. By this means he thinks to conceal from us the Church's authority in the first exercises and the first acts of faith we make, before we have read the Holy Scripture. But he ought to have considered, *first*, that the argument I proposed to him did not regard merely children. Children are not the only Christians that have not read the Scripture. M. Claude is not ignorant that there were in the beginning of Christianity not only individuals, but also whole nations, that, according to the testimony of St. Irenæus,* had not the Holy Scripture, and were perfect Christians, although they did not read the Scripture. The question, then, between us regards in general *all* such as have not read the Holy Scripture, of what age soever they may be, and whatsoever may have been the cause of their not having read it; for it is in respect of such, and, if you will, in respect of those whom St. Irenæus mentions, or of their like, that I inquire—on whose faith do they believe the Scripture, and enter upon the reading of it, as being inspired by God? If they have but a human faith, as M. Claude says, they are not Christians; and if they have a divine faith (as must be acknowledged, or an absurdity be encountered from which we recoil), it is then true that divine faith, without one's having read the Scripture, immediately follows the Church's doctrine, and establishes her infallible authority. It is on this authority that every Christian who takes this Scripture in hand begins by believing, with a firm faith, that all he is going to read is divine; and he stays not the believing of this Scripture until he has read it all; he believes the first chapter before he has read the second, and believes the whole before he has read the first letter, or so much as opened the book. Therefore, he does not form his faith by the reading of the Scripture; this reading finds his faith already formed; this reading does but confirm to a Christian all he already believed, and all he

* [Multæ gentes barbarorum, eorum qui in Christum credunt, sine charta et atramento scriptam habentes per Spiritum in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem Traditionem diligenter custodientes. Contra Hæres. iii. 4. p. 178. *Ed. Ben.*]

had already found in the Church's belief. He believed, then, before all, that the Church deceived him not; it was by this he began to perform the acts of a Christian. Children are instructed in no other manner. When they hear their parents, it is the Church they hear; for our parents are our teachers only as they are children of the Church. It is for this reason the Holy Ghost refers us to them:—"ask thy father and he will show thee; ask thy elders, and they will tell thee."* St. Basil, so great a divine, justifies himself, and at the same time confounds heretics, by alleging to them the faith of his mother and of his grandmother, St. Macrina,† and he herein imitates St. Paul, who praises Timothy‡ for having an unfeigned faith, which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice. The meaning is, that true doctrine ought always to descend from hand to hand, and that there shall always be a true Church, to which none can ever show her beginning, nor find in her state those marks of interruption and novelty which all other sects bear on their brow. Christian parents, joined to this Church, join their children to her, and put them at the feet of her ministers to be there instructed.

It is not to be imagined that children, in whom reason begins to dawn, are incapable of feeling the impressions of truth, because they cannot reason methodically. We see them in still more tender years learning to speak; how it is they learn, by what they make the distinction between the noun and the verb, the substantive and the adjective, neither themselves know, nor can we, who have learned by this method, well unfold: so deep and abstruse it is. Much after the same manner we learn the Church's language. A secret light guides us in both these states; in the one it is reason, in the other it is faith. Reason discovers itself by little and little, and so does faith infused by baptism. We must have motives to fix us to the Church's authority; God knows them, and we know them in general: in what manner he classes them, how he makes these innocent souls perceive them, is the secret of his Holy Spirit. However, it is certain that this *is* done, and that by this he begins. As this is the first Christian act we perform, and as on this foundation all is built, so it subsists for ever. The time will come when we shall know more distinctly why we believe, and the Church's authority will become from day to day stronger in our minds. Scripture itself will strengthen the bands which fasten us to her: but we must always revert to the origin—that is, to believing on the Church's authority. What age soever we are

* Deut. xxxii. 7.

† Epist. 223; T. iii. 388.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 5.

at, it is by this we begin to believe the Scripture ; we continue also on the same foundation, and St. Augustine was a complete master in ecclesiastical science, when he said he should not believe the Gospel, were he not moved by the authority of the Catholic Church.* I could, were it in dispute, show the same opinion in the other Fathers. We must always re-ascend to the first principle, and this is the first principle that fixes us to the Church. Let us not be taxed with this "vicious circle :"—the Church makes us believe the Scripture ; the Scripture makes us believe the Church. *This on both sides is true, in different respects.* The Church and the Scripture are so made for one another, and do so perfectly adapt themselves one to the other, that they support each other as the stones of an arch and of a building mutually keep each other in their place. All nature is full of such examples. I bear the staff on which I lean ; the flesh binds and covers the bones which sustain it ; and all things in the universe mutually aid one another. So it is with the Church and the Scripture. There was but one Church, such as Jesus Christ founded, to which such a Scripture as we have could be addressed ; that is, such a one as durst promise the Church, in which this Scripture was made, an eternal continuance. If any one receives the Scripture, by the Scripture I will prove to him the Church ; if he acknowledges the Church, by the Church I will prove to him the Scripture : but since we must begin on one side, I have clearly enough shewn, by M. Claude's own confession, that, if we begin not by the Church, the divinity of the Scripture, and the faith we ought to have in it, is in danger ; wherefore, the Holy Ghost begins our instruction by fixing us to the Church : "I believe the Catholic Church." Amongst our adversaries, a man must examine before he believes ; and he must, before all things, examine the Scripture, by which he examines all the rest. It is not enough to have read some particular verses, some chapters, some books ; until such time as one has read all, compared all, examined all, faith continues in suspense, since it is by this examination it is formed. Amongst true Christians, a man believes at once : "Thy faith hath saved thee," said Jesus Christ ; "Thy faith," observes Tertullian, in that divine work of Prescriptions, "and not thy being versed in the Scriptures."† There is no need of passing through opinions, doubts, and the uncertainties of human faith. "I never changed," said St. Basil : "what I believed from my infancy has only been strengthened in my following

* See page 60.

† Fides tua te salvum fecit, non exercitatio Scripturarum.

years. Without passing from one opinion to another, I have only perfected what was at first given me by my parents. As a grain, in growing, of little that it was, becomes large, but continues always the same in itself, and without changing its nature takes only increase, so is my faith increased :—and this is not a change in which one passes from worse to better, but an accomplishment of a work already begun, and the confirmation of faith by knowledge.”* In this manner, we pass not, as amongst our Reformed, from a state of doubt to a state of certainty; or, as M. Claude prefers to express it, from a human faith to a divine. Divine faith is declared at once upon the Church’s first instructions; and this could never be, did not her infallible authority prevent all our doubts and all examination.

“It is thus,” as says St. Augustin—“it is thus, I say, that those believe, who, not being able to arrive at understanding, secure their salvation by the simplicity of their faith.”† If we must always examine before we believe, we must begin by examining whether God exist, and hearkening for some time, with a kind of suspension of mind, to the arguments of impious men; that is, we must pass to the belief of the Divinity through Atheism; since examination and doubt on that subject is a species of Atheism. Not so: God has placed his mark in the world, which is the work of his hands, and by this divine mark he imprints in souls, before all doubts, the sentiment of his divinity; in like manner he has placed his mark in his Church, the most perfect work of his wisdom. By this mark, the Holy Ghost makes the true Church known to the Children of God, and this characteristic, which distinguishes her from all other assemblies, gives her so great an authority, that, before all doubts and all opinions, we without hesitation admit not only the Holy Scripture, but also all her sound doctrine. Thus are the children of the true Church instructed: those that are instructed or educated in a strange Church, as soon as they perceive her waver in any part whatever of her instruction, ought to stretch forth their arms to the Church which has reason never to waver, because she has never varied or wavered, and they feel that they ought to return to it, because it never should have been quitted.

It may now be determined, whether I was likely to be embarrassed about the promise I had made Mademoiselle de Duras, to bring M. Claude to acknowledge a moment in which, by the

* Ep. 223, *ubi supra*.

[† Ceteram quippe turbam (he has just spoken of the wisdom of the few) non intelligendi vivacitas sed credendi simplicitas tutissimam facit. Tom. viii. 111.]

principles of his religion, a Christian had but a human faith concerning the truth of the Scripture. How could I be embarrassed about a thing which M. Claude acknowledged in the Conference, and which he acknowledges still in his Relation, though he has weakened both my proof and his own admission? It is true, he will not let the word "doubting" cross his lips: but I never engaged to make his tongue articulate those two syllables; the equivalent is enough for me. To make a Christian who is going to read the Holy Scriptures incapable of divine faith, is an evil of sufficient magnitude; to content oneself in this condition with a human faith, is too evidently to renounce Christianity. I have, then, manifestly what I desired from M. Claude's acknowledgment. And if he reply, that the faith he here speaks of excludes doubt, resembling that which makes us believe that there is a city called Constantinople, or that there was heretofore a king named Alexander the Great, though we know it but by men; this indeed is not enough for a Christian, who ought to act by a divine faith, but it is still enough to confound M. Claude, since, according to this answer, the Church would always have an authority equal to that which all mankind, as I may say, have when they unanimously depose concerning a palpable fact. Thus, in what manner soever M. Claude explains to us his human faith, the victory of the truth I asserted will be established by his confession: since, if he say that his human faith excludes doubt, he supposes it an infallible truth; and if he say that it leaves a doubt, he will in fine have pronounced these fatal syllables he so much shunned. If, when having so strong a cause, I trembled for any thing but the danger of those into whose hearts I feared that, either by reason of my own weakness, or their prepossession, I could not make the truth sufficiently enter, I ill understood the truth I defended. However, because I said, in my account of the Conference,* that, upon M. Claude objecting to me the Greek Church and others, I trembled through apprehension, lest an objection proposed with so much address and eloquence might put a soul in peril, M. Claude has taken advantage of the moment to make me appear vanquished. "Here," says he, "it may with truth be said, that the Bishop of Condom's mind was seen not to be in its usual state, and that there was a perceptible abatement of that freedom which is so natural to him." In reply, I may observe, that my trembling, whence this advantage is drawn, was interior, and that I can scarce believe that M. Claude could have perceived it, had I not myself sincerely related it in my recital;

* Page 48.

but what matter is it, what was either the effect or cause of my fear? Men will say, if they please, that, disconcerted by M. Claude's objection, I would cover the disorder into which I visibly fell, by feigning alarm for the salvation of one who looked for instruction from my hands. I will own it, if they please; or rather, to avoid an untruth, I will let it pass without opposition. Let me have trembled before M. Claude, provided that even in trembling I spoke the truth. I did speak it; they need only see what were my answers, and whether after all I failed to draw from M. Claude's mouth the acknowledgment which I purposed. After this, the more I shall have trembled, and the weaker I shall have been, the more certain it will be that it was the truth that sustained me.

There is a part of the Conference which M. Claude passes over in four words. It is that where I showed him the horrible state of his Church, which set itself up, after the example of all false Churches, by separating from all Christian Churches in the world, and without finding any Church which thought as she did at the time of her establishment: so that she was not linked by any continuity either with the time that went before or with any Church which appeared then in the world. This fact passed for evident; and how short soever M. Claude has been in the recital of this part, he says enough to show that, in acknowledging this important fact, he has only endeavored to cover the shame of such a condition by the example of the apostles when they separated from the synagogue.

I will not repeat what I said on this subject; you have seen it in the Conference,* and M. Claude, who relates but a word about it, does not oblige me to any new explanation. I shall only say, that he gives a very incorrect view of this part of the discussion:—"The company rose," says he, "and the conversation which continued some time longer, became much more confused and various subjects were spoken of." I know not why M. Claude represents our conversation as confused; it was not so in any part, and it was less so, if possible, at this juncture than during the remaining time. It is true we had risen, and some of the company had withdrawn, but M. Claude and I kept our ground face to face. Mademoiselle de Duras seemed to have redoubled her attention; and, after so many principles declared, the dispute became more vivid and more conclusive than ever. If we spoke of "various subjects," it was not ramblingly, and all tended to the same end. The reader may see that it was so;† and if my word be not believed on the question, it will be

* Page 53.

† See pages 53—62.

found, whenever M. Claude publishes his Relation, that the little he says naturally requires all that I recite. At all events, it was admitted that the "Reformed," in establishing their Church, had followed a course quite the contrary to that ever followed by the orthodox, and precisely that of all heretics; and M. Claude, when pressed upon this matter, could not show in the whole history of Christianity a single truly Christian Church founded as the Churches of the new Reformation.

It may now be determined what likelihood there is that what all heretics have done, contrary to the practice of all the orthodox, can ever be authorized by the example of the apostles when they separated from the synagogue. However, since M. Claude places the strength of his defence in this example, I desire him to add to the evident facts I alleged to him on this subject, these short Reflections:—*that* though Jesus Christ, authorized of himself, had no need of any succession to make himself believed, nevertheless, to inculcate to us how necessary it is for the true religion to have a succession always manifest, he would, at his coming into the world, find there a Church actually subsisting in its entire state:—*that* he was born, and lived, in this Church actually subsisting, that is, in the synagogue, and would so form his Church in the midst of her, that even the apostles, after his ascension and the coming down of the Holy Ghost, continued publicly in the service of the temple, which was then the most authentic mark of communion:—*that* whatever measures were decreed against them, the apostles are not seen ever to have withdrawn from it, as long as the temple was in being, and the synagogue could keep either its exterior form, or even any appearance of its ancient state:—*that* God, who would, in fine, have his children entirely separated from the Jews, had first extinguished in this ungrateful people, by a manifest reprobation, together with the sacrifice and priesthood, all the marks of a Church, so that it seemed rather, that the synagogue with its temple was falling to ruin than that the children of God were departing from it:—*that* then, far from leaving any hope to this people, as he had done in the ancient transmigration and ruin of the first temple, he had, on the contrary, given every mark of an implacable anger:—*that*, to prevent such a fall of his heretofore chosen people, and the divorce declared to the synagogue, formally his spouse, affording the least pretext of suspecting any like event in time to come, he had caused this future fall and divorce to be foretold by all his prophets, as a singular example of his wrath, and at the same time protested, that no such thing should ever befall that Church with which he made an everlasting covenant:—*that* besides all this, and although the reprobation

tion of the synagogue was clearly announced in the Scripture, and although the apostles, without making any innovation in the doctrine, did but follow Him who had until their time been always, without any interruption, expected: nevertheless, (because there was some rupture with the synagogue, heretofore the true Church) there was required, to authorize them in this action, no less than Jesus Christ himself, present on earth with all the authority of the Eternal Father:—in a word, *that* to dissent from the sentiments of the synagogue, although moreover confuted by the Scriptures, it was necessary that Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, in whom all was to be united, should appear visible on earth, with the incontestable marks of his mission.—I leave you now to consider whether an example of this nature can give any occasion of ever separating from the Church of Jesus Christ, or of saying that this Church, founded on the rock, was to fall, or that the succession, of which Jesus Christ is the source, could suffer any interruption, or whether, on the contrary, every thing does not here denounce such an attempt.

Hitherto we have seen what concerns the Conference, and M. Claude's manner of relating it. We are now to consider what he opposes to the Instructions that preceded it. He answers them largely in the tract we have already mentioned. This tract has no title, and is drawn up in the form of a letter. To make ourselves better understood, let us give it a name, and call it "M. Claude's manuscript answer." It has been seen that the Conference was on my part preceded by two Instructions, the first of which* established the perpetual visibility of the Church; and the second† cleared some objections taken from the Book of Kings. M. Claude has followed this division. He, accordingly, divides his answer into two parts; the first is subdivided into four questions. In the *first*, he treats of the Universal Church which the creed speaks of, and blames me for not having comprehended in it, with all the blessed spirits, the saints which shall be born even to the end of the world. In the *second*, he examines whether the Church can be defined by her external communion, as he supposes I have done. In the *third*, he treats of the Church's perpetual visibility: and, in the *fourth*, he inquires to which Church Jesus Christ's promises belong; whether to that I have settled, or to that he has established? He draws afterwards *eleven inferences* from the doctrine he has laid down, and passes to the second part, wherein he maintains the objections taken from the Book of Kings. Such is the plan of his work.

* Page 14 *et seq.*

† Page 26—30.

It is in these four questions and eleven inferences that he attacks, with all his might, the doctrine I have taught, concerning the perpetual visibility of the Church; but it will presently appear that he could not do so, until he had first framed himself a false idea of it.

To show that the Church spoken of in the creed ought to be always visible, I said, that all Christians, by the term "Church," understood a society making profession to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and govern itself by his word, whence it follows that it is visible, and linked by an exterior and sensible communion:* thus I laid down my position at the outset, and this was what I had to make good.

It was not required of me, as M. Claude supposes, to give a perfect definition of the Church, nor to prove her interior union by the Holy Ghost, by faith, by charity:—for on this we are agreed. The question then being only about the outward marks of this union, I had done all in showing that these exterior marks are inseparable from the Church, and consequently that she is always visible. But because I said, that "by the word Church is understood a society making profession to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ," M. Claude, throughout his manuscript answer, but principally in the second and fourth questions, will persuade me, that I consider the Church as "a *merely* external society," constituted in its essence "by a mere profession of believing," without believing indeed; "whose whole nature and essence consist in bare externals and appearances, without reality; whose unity is only a unity of profession, an exterior unity; so that the interior is in it only by accident: and though there should be neither faithful nor just in it, and it should be wholly composed of hypocrites, it would still be the true Church."

This is, really, a frightful view of the Church, and I am not surprised at M. Claude's shuddering at it: however, this notion is as far from my mind and the minds of all Catholics, as heaven is from hell; and I know not how M. Claude could read my Instructions without seeing in them quite the contrary to what he ascribes to me. Since the reader has now these Instructions before his eyes, I desire him to pass them over again.

He will find there, indeed, that it is of the essence of the Church to be visible by preaching, and by the sacraments; but he will find there also, "that the elect and the saints are the most noble part of it; that they are there sanctified, that they are there regenerated, often even by the ministry of the repro-

* Page 14 *et seq.*

bate ; that they must not be regarded as making a body apart, but as making the fairest and most noble portion of it.”*

He will find there, that it is of the essence of the Church, “because she is holy, ever to teach steadily and invariably the holy doctrine;”† but he will find that this holy doctrine which she incessantly teaches continually brings forth saints in her unity, and that by this doctrine she instructs and holds in her bosom the elect of God.‡ Do they call this a bare profession of Jesus Christ’s doctrine, without reality, and a mere mass of hypocrites ?

He will find it there stated, that hell cannot prevail against the visible and external society of the Church ; but he will find also, that it is because “it cannot prevail against the elect, who are the purest and most spiritual part of this Church,”§—it is, I say, “because it cannot prevail against the elect, that it cannot prevail against the Church which teaches them, in which they confess the gospel and receive the sacraments.” Thus, instead of believing that this Church, which subsists eternally, can according to our principles, subsist without the elect ; it is, on the contrary, seen that we consider the elect as making the most essential part and strength of this Church.

He will there find that it is of the essence of the Church, until the general resurrection, to have the ecclesiastical ministry, which renders her visible ;|| but he will find also, that the effect of this ministry is to bring the children of God to the perfect stature of Jesus Christ—that is, to perfection ; which, after it has rendered them holy, will render them glorious both in body and soul.

In fine, he will find “the exterior and interior communion of the faithful with Jesus Christ, and of the faithful amongst themselves ; the interior communion by charity, and in the Holy Ghost who animates us ; but at the same time the exterior communion in the sacraments, in the confession of faith, and in all the outward ministry of the Church ;”¶ whence I concluded, that “it is not barely the society of the predestinate that shall subsist for ever ; but that it is the visible body in which the predestinate are included, which preaches to them, which teaches them, which regenerates them by baptism, which nourishes them by the eucharist, which administers to them the keys, which governs them and keeps them united under discipline, WHICH FORMS JESUS CHRIST IN THEM : it is this visible body that shall subsist for ever.”** All this shows, that far from making a Church whose communion is of its own nature merely

* Page 17. † Page 18. ‡ Ib. § Page 19. || Page 21. ¶ Page 22. ** Ib.

exterior, and "interior only by accident," the essence of the Church is, on the contrary, the interior communion, of which the exterior communion is the mark, and that the effect of this mark is to show that the children of God are kept and included under this seal. It is seen also, that the elect are the ultimate object for which all is done in the Church, and those whom all her ministry is principally to serve, so that they make the most essential part, and, as I may say, the very substance of the Church.

If, then, I have spoken more of the outward communion than of the inward communion of the Church, it is plainly seen that this can be only for the reason I have mentioned, to wit, that the Reformed being agreed with us, that the substance, as I may say, of the Church is her inward union, I needed only establish the outward, the necessity whereof they contest.

Thus, when I said at first in my Instruction, that the Church was the society which confessed the true faith, M. Claude ought to have understood that this confession of the mouth did not exclude the belief of the heart, but rather supposed it in the living and essential part of the Church, of which I did not speak then, for the reason that it was not the question I had to propose and resolve. To conclude, from this silence, that I admit no other union essential to the body of the Church but this outward union, is the same as if one, that should have undertaken to explain only those external ligaments which keep human bodies united from without, and include, as I may say, in one and the same category with the living members, the nails, the hair, the peccant humours, and even the dead members, not yet cut off from the body, should be therefore represented as acknowledging no other principle of union, and under this pretence it should be said of him, that, according to this man's principles, there might be a human body which should be only hair, nails, rotten members, and peccant humours, without having any thing living in effect. This is what M. Claude does, when he concludes, from my discourse, that the Church of Jesus Christ may be only a mass of wicked men and hypocrites. But this will appear farther in what follows, by M. Claude's own principles; it is sufficient for me in this place to show him that this merely exterior Church, which he calls "the Church of Cardinals Bellarmin and Du Perron, and of the Bishop of Condom," is a Church that subsists only in his imagination; and one may believe by his manner of judging in regard of my sentiments, that he understands those of these illustrious cardinals no better.

To show that the word Church signifies in the Apostles' creed a visible Church, I laid for a foundation that, in a confession of faith, such as this creed was, words were used in their most

natural and most simple signification ; and I added that the word Church so naturally signified the *visible* Church, that the Reformed—the devisers of the chimera of an invisible Church—never, throughout their confession of faith, used the word Church in this sense, but solely to express the visible Church, invested with the sacraments, with the word, and with all the public ministry. See the passages of the confession of faith I have related, with the consequences I have drawn from them.*

I was not the first who made this remark ; it was a National Synod of the “ Reformed.” After having preached so much about the invisible Church, and having, when pressed upon the succession, grounded on this foundation the invisible succession of which they made use,—the Reformed teachers wondered they had not spoken one single word of it in their confession of faith, where, on the contrary, the word Church is always taken for the visible Church. Surprised at this language, so natural to Christians, but so little in unison with the principles of their Reformation, they enacted the following decree in the year 1603, in the Synod of Gap, in the chapter which has for its title —“ On the Confession of Faith.” It is by this all the synods begin; and the first thing that is done in them is to review this confession of faith, which gave occasion to the printers to reprint it with this title, forbidden in the synods :†—“ *The confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches, revised and CORRECTED by the National Synod.*” But let us come to the decree of Gap, of which these are the words :—“ the provinces shall be exhorted to consider, in the Provincial Synods, in what terms the 25th article of the confession of faith ought to be couched ; forasmuch as being to express what we believe touching the Catholic Church, of which mention is made in the creed, there is nothing in the said confession that can be taken but for the militant and visible Church : as also in the 29th article they shall see whether it be fit to add the word ‘ pure ’ to the expression ‘ true Church,’ which is in the said article ; and, in general, all shall come prepared on the matters of the Church.”

We have related the substance of this 25th article.‡ In the same place may be seen the 26th, 27th, and 28th articles ; and as for the 29th article, it says, that “ the true Church ought to be governed according to the policy which our Lord Jesus Christ established ; that is, that there be pastors, overseers, and deacons, to the end the pure doctrine may have its course, and the assemblies be held in the name of God.”

The addition of the word “ *pure* Church,” which they deli-

* Page 15.

† Synod of Privas, 1612.

‡ Page 15.

berated about adding to that of "true," is founded on a doctrine of the pretended Reformed, which says that a true Church may not be pure, because with the essential truths it may have errors mixed. I say even gross and considerable errors against faith: and this is one of the mysteries of the new Reformation which M. Claude will explain for us by-and-by, but it is not to our present purpose. The important matter to note is, that these people, who say they are sent of God to revive the pure doctrine of the gospel, having to explain, as themselves declare in their confession of faith, "the Church, of which mention is made in the creed," had, after all, spoken only of the militant and visible Church. I could easily assign the reason: it is, that this Church, of which mention is made in the creed, is indeed the visible Church; it is that the word Church naturally involves this visibility, and the word Catholic, far from derogating from it, presupposes it; it is because, in a confession of faith, men often speak rather according to the natural ideas the words bear with them, than according to the refinements and evasions they invent to escape out of a difficulty. Thus, the invisible Church never occurred to our Reformed when they framed their confession of faith; the sense of visible Church appeared only in it; there seemed to be nothing in this but what was natural, until the year 1603. In 1603, they were roused as from a slumber; they began to find it strange that a Church which grounded her succession on the idea of an invisible Church, and of a Church of the predestinate, should not have said one word about it in her confession of faith, but have left it as a settled point that the natural signification of the word Church always imported a visible society; so that, correctly speaking, the succession of the Church could no longer be shown without showing the succession of her visibility; a thing utterly impossible for the new Reformation. It was this inclined the whole synod to reconsider this article, and to exhort the provinces "to come prepared upon the matters of the Church," which had never been well understood amongst the new Reformed, which are not yet understood, and which will make Catholics of all those that can understand them. But this was a very delicate matter—this reconsidering of the article of the Church. It was sounding an alarm: it was too plainly pointing out a flaw, and furnishing the printers with a still better reason than ever for entitling the formulary, "*The Confession, revised and CORRECTED.*" So, in the Synod of Rochelle, held in 1607, it was resolved, "not to add or expunge any thing in the 25th and 29th articles, nor to meddle afresh with the subject of the Church." By the decision of this synod, the visible Church alone appears in the "Reformed"

confession of faith ; the invisible Church has no part in it, and one draws from it what consequences he can.

That which I draw is a serious one : for if the Church appears only as visible, in the "Reformed" confession of faith, and if, besides, they assert this confession of faith as conformable to Scripture in every point, they must tell us that this manner of explaining the Church is derived from Scripture, and that from the Scripture it has passed naturally into the ordinary language of Christians, into confessions of faith, and consequently into the creed, which is not only the best authorized of all the confessions of faith, but also the most simple.

M. Claude answers us, "that custom changes, and that in process of time words often depart from their first and natural signification;" and that besides, though it should be true, as I have said, that the word Church, taken simply, should signify the visible Church, the word "universal" would change this signification. But he shall not escape us by this subterfuge; for we have still an argument left to overwhelm the whole so-called Reformation. Here it is, taken from the very principles laid down by themselves: The word Church ought to be taken, in the "confession of faith" of the "Reformed" as it is naturally taken in Scripture: else, on a fundamental article of the Christian religion, this confession of faith would not be, as it pretends it is, conformable to the Holy Scripture. Now, in this confession of faith, the word Church is taken for a visible society;—this proposition is acknowledged in the Synod of Gap, as we have just seen. Therefore, it is thus that the word Church is naturally taken in Scripture. But it is taken in the creed in the *same* sense in which it is taken in Scripture:—this M. Claude and Protestants will not deny:—therefore equally both in Scripture and in the creed is it taken for a visible Church; and the term Catholic or universal, inserted in the creed, as M. Claude admits, to distinguish the whole body of the Church truly Christian, spread over the whole earth, "from all false Churches and all particular Churches," instead of rendering the Church invisible, makes her so much the more visible, as it more visibly separates her from all false Churches, and expressly brings within her bosom all particular Churches, so visible and so remarkable by their common profession of faith and their common government.

But without disputing any further, we need only hearken to M. Claude and hear his concessions, in his manuscript answer, concerning the Church's perpetual visibility. And would to God I could here transcribe the whole of this work! A multitude of things in favor of our doctrine would appear, which I

cannot make well understood until it shall be public. However, it is not for me to publish it: and I have deemed it sufficient to transcribe at length, forasmuch as is necessary, the passages you are going to see, such as I found them in the Duke of Chevreuse's manuscript, acknowledged, as I have said,* by M. Claude himself.

Now, if he be found to speak of the Church after a manner unprecedented in the so-styled Reformation, no exception should be taken against his doing so; for *two* reasons. First, because, in fact, he has taught the same doctrine in his other works, though he has here explained it more fully and in better order than ever. Secondly, because he pretends to say nothing new: a circumstance at which we ought to rejoice; there being nothing more desirable than to witness the number of principles and articles increase whereon we may agree. Let us, therefore, enter with all our heart into this charitable design: let us see in what M. Claude agrees with us, and let us relate his doctrine in the same order that he states it in his third and fourth questions, and afterwards in his eleven inferences.

The first concession I find is:—"That it is manifest that, though the true Church be mixed with the wicked in one and the same confession, it is nevertheless visible in the mixture, as the good grain with the tares in one and the same field, and as the good fishes with the bad in one and the same net." This goes well. Let us proceed: "This mixture hinders indeed the just discernment of persons, but it hinders not the discernment or the distinction of the *classes* of persons, even with certainty. We know not certainly *who* in particular are true believers or who are hypocrites: but we certainly know that there *are* true believers, as there are hypocrites; which is sufficient to constitute the visibility of the true Church." I hear this with joy: assuredly we shall get on. M. Claude concedes already as "manifest," that there will be always a visible body, of which one may say: "There are the true believers."

I continue to read his answer, and I find that he blames me for charging the Reformed with not believing that the body "in which," according to St. Paul, "God has placed some, apostles; some, teachers; some, pastors;" &c., is the Church of Christ. Right glad am I to be reprehended, provided we advance! So then, it is a settled thing that the body of Jesus Christ, which is the Church, shall always be composed of pastors, of teachers, of preachers, and also of people: it is then, consequently, always very visible, and the succession of pastors, as well as that of people, ought to be manifest in it.

* *Supra*, page 63.

M. Claude here confirms his discourse by a passage of M. Mestresat, who determines "that we must not seek the Church of God, out of the visible state of the ministry and the word." So much the better; and I am overjoyed that M. Claude finds in his Church many followers of this doctrine. I was afraid the ministers were unwilling to acknowledge the visible Church to be spoken of in the passage of St. Paul to the Ephesians, where the Church is represented to us "without spot and without blemish;"* and I had set myself to prove that this Church, described by St. Paul, was the visible Church, because it was "washed by baptism and by the word." M. Claude enters into my view at once. He says, that in this passage we must understand, indeed, "the Church which is already in heaven, but *also* the visible Church, which is on earth, as making together but one and the same body;" and here again he cites M. Mestresat. I receive this doctrine; and should any of our Reformed, be it M. Claude himself, ever object to me, that I must not rely so much on the Church's visibility, since there is at least a part of this Church which is invisible—that is to say, that which is in heaven,—I will answer, that this ought to give us no concern, since, after all, according to this doctrine of M. Mestresat and M. Claude, being in communion with the visible part of the Church, I am sure to be so also with the invisible part, which is already in heaven with Jesus Christ; so that it is certain that all is finally reduced to the visibility.

M. Claude passes then to the objections that may be made and he decides, at once, "that the visibility of the Church is a visibility of the ministry." He must, therefore, as he acknowledges a perpetual visibility in the Church, end by showing us a succession in the ministry, and, in one word, a line of lawful pastors.

He objects to himself, that "the ministry is common to the good and the bad;" whence it seems one might draw an inference against his doctrine, that good and bad compose the Church:—and he answers, "that if the ministry be actually common to the good and the bad, this is only by accident and through the fraud of the enemy; that, of right, it belongs only to the true believers, and that the supernatural destination is only for them." All this is clear, except the expression, "the ministry, of right, belongs only to the true believers." For, as one might understand by this, that none but true believers are lawful pastors, each individual might find himself burdened with the difficult task of examining whether pastors are really

* Eph. v. 27.

true believers, and be led to suppose that they cease to be pastors when they cease to be good men, although nothing scandalous appear in their conduct. This was the pernicious doctrine of Wycliffe, which would put the whole Church in confusion. Exclusive of this erroneous sense, which cannot be in M. Claude's mind, I grant him all he says : for, doubtless, it is not the primary intent of Jesus Christ that there should be ministers who should be deceivers : it happens only through the malice of the enemy. The destination of the ministry is for true believers. Jesus Christ did not establish it to call into the Church deceivers and hypocrites. Who can think so? But, nevertheless, these deceivers and these hypocrites may be sufficiently of the Church, to be lawful pastors in it ; and the true believers being to live to the end of the world under the authority of this mixed ministry, there must, therefore, without examining whether the ministers be good or evil, be shown us a succession of them always manifest, under which the people of God have been perpetuated.

The more I continue my reading, the more I find this truth evidently declared. For, upon entering on the fourth question, I find, indeed, that M. Claude there engages to show that the passages wherein Jesus Christ promises the Church to perpetuate her on earth regard only the society of true believers ; but he, nevertheless, equally admits that this Church never ceases to be visible, and that Jesus Christ has promised it should be so. I undertook to show the visible Church in these words :—“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;”* the reasons, I made use of, to prove it, may be seen.† M. Claude receives this doctrine with its proofs and he acknowledges “that the Church which is spoken of in this passage is, in fact, a confessing Church ; a Church which publishes the faith ; a Church to which Jesus Christ has given an external ministry ; a Church which uses the ministry of the keys, and which binds and looses ; and which, consequently, has the properties of being external and visible.” It is such a Church, that Jesus Christ has, in the text cited, promised to perpetuate on earth. M. Claude will not allow any one to tell him that she ceases to be ; and thus she always is with all that ministry which is essential to her : whence M. Claude concludes with me, “that the ecclesiastical ministry will last without discontinuance until the general resurrection,” and grants, without difficulty, that this promise of Jesus Christ, “I am with you always,”‡ regards the perpetuity

* Matt. xvi. 18.

† *Supra*, page 20.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

of the ecclesiastical ministry. "Jesus Christ promises," says he, "to be with the Church, to baptize with her, and to teach with her, *without interruption, even to the end of the world.*" There will, therefore, ever be teachers with whom Jesus Christ will teach, and true preaching will never cease in his Church.

But will this ministry continue for ever so pure, that none but good men shall be admitted to it? We have seen that M. Claude does not insist that it will be so. In fact, there is no promise of *this* perpetual purity: the promise is—that, whatsoever the morals of these ministers may be, Jesus Christ will always act, always baptize, and *always teach* with them; and the effect of this ministry, though a promiscuous one, will be such, that under its authority "the Church will be always visible; not indeed," says M. Claude, "with a distinct view, which goes so far as to say with certainty, such and such are personally true believers; but with an indistinct view, which is notwithstanding, certain, and which goes so far as to say, The true believers are there, to wit, *in that exterior profession.*"

Let us (if they will) not designate all that exterior profession by the name of "Church;" let us refrain from this term, since M. Claude is averse to it; and like true reasonable and peaceable Christians, let us endeavor to agree on the thing. This "exterior profession," which may be always marked, and, as I may say, always pointed to with the finger, is mixed of good and evil men: the ministry which governs it is also mixed. M. Claude allows all this. It may nevertheless, be said, Under this ministry, and *in this exterior profession, are the true believers*; this is what we just now heard from the same minister's mouth. If then, according to his doctrine, the society of true believers subsists for ever, and continues always visible on earth; if it may always be shown in an exterior profession, and is there *alone* visible, as M. Claude says; it not only follows, that there always will be true believers upon earth, but that this mingled profession, of good and bad men, where these true believers are found, where they are shown, where they are pointed to, shall be there also; and on this we agree with M. Claude.—But since all these passages are scattered up and down his answer, here is one, in which he has taken care to collect all together.

It is after his fourth question, and in the seventh inference, that this minister, endeavoring to explain the 31st article of the confession of faith, where it is said, "that in our days," and before the Reformation, "the state of the Church was interrupted." He distinguishes the state of the Church interrupted for a time from the Church which is never interrupted, ac-

according to his principles ; and he defines the Church as follows : —“ The Church,” says he, “ are the true believers, who make profession of the Christian truth, of piety, and of true holiness, under a ministry which furnishes her with the aliments necessary for spiritual life, without defrauding her of any of them.” We shall discover in due time what is the hidden meaning of these “ spiritual aliments.” Meanwhile, let us agree with M. Claude, that the Church always subsists, and always subsists visible, since by his definition, she is nothing else but the true believers, “ *who make profession of Christian truth*, under the ecclesiastical ministry.” Here is an immovable foundation. Let us see what we can build on it ; but, before we build, we are going to see objections fall.

M. Claude objects to me, *first*, that it is in vain for me to attempt establishing my society composed of good and bad, and the eternal duration of the same, on these inviolable promises of Jesus Christ, “ Thou art Peter,” and “ I am always with you.” “ It is not,” says he, “ of the wicked that it can be said, that hell shall not prevail against them ; it is not with wicked men and hypocrites that Jesus Christ has promised always to be, and these promises respect only true believers.” If we add, according to M. Claude’s principles, that supposing these promises respect only true believers, they respect them at least in this ministry, and in this exterior profession, the objection will at the same time be resolved. For, indeed, if the true believers ought to be always shown and always visible, according to M. Claude, in this exterior profession, in which the good and the bad are mixed,—it follows, that this composition, by what name soever it be called, shall always appear on earth. Now, no one can be assured of a society subsisting always, and always in a visible state, unless God has promised it. His promises regard even then this mixture ; and not only the true believers, but, *with* them, all the society in which they are ever, according to his decrees, to appear. By consequence, we must understand these promises of Jesus Christ otherwise than M. Claude teaches. The promises of Jesus Christ respect not the wicked alone, nor were they made for their sake. If M. Claude said only this, his observation would be just. But these promises, which Jesus Christ made to his faithful, comprehend also the wicked who are mixed with them. When God by his prophets promised the ancient people to give them plentiful harvests, with the corn he promised also the chaff : and to preserve the harvest is to preserve the chaff with the corn. In like manner, to promise the Church and her eternal duration, is to promise, with the elect, the wicked, in the midst of whom God encloses them. And the

wicked in the Church are for the just, as the chaff in the harvest is for the corn; and as God promises not the chaff either alone or for itself, so he promises not the wicked either alone or for themselves. But, nevertheless, all this blending will subsist, in virtue of the divine promise, until the final separation, when the wicked, as the chaff, will be cast into the fire that shall never be quenched. Meanwhile Jesus Christ will be always with the whole society thus composed: keeping there the sound doctrine in all the exterior, which He knows how to carry into the interior, even into the hearts, of those who live; in the same manner as nourishment, presented to our whole body in the same way, quickens only the members which are disposed to receive it.

A *second* objection of M. Claude's will fall by the same principle.

He objects to me, that, in defining the Catholic Church mentioned in the creed, I speak only of the Church which is actually on earth, instead of comprehending in it all the elect which have been, are, and shall be, and, in fine, with the holy angels, all the heavenly Jerusalem. I have already answered, that it was neither my intention, nor was I called upon, to define the Church but in relation to our subject and her visibility. I add, however, that in saying this, I have, according to M. Claude's own principles, said all: for, according to him, in the outward profession—that is, in what renders the Church visible—may be marked the true believers, with whom all the saints of every time and place, not excepting the holy angels, are united. “The Church which is on earth,” M. Claude says, “is one with that which is already gathered in heaven, and with that which God will cause to spring up throughout all generations, all which three together make but one, which is called the Universal Church.” God be praised! When I have found the outward profession which renders the Church visible, M. Claude has already told us that I shall have found the true believers—that is, according to him, the true Church actually present on earth; and he now tells us, that with this Church, I shall by the same means have both that which is already in heaven and that which God will cause to arise in all succeeding ages. We need, then, inquire only after the Church which is on earth, and the outward profession which shows her to us, being assured to have found *there*, without further inquiry, the perfect communion of saints and the society of all the elect.

When under the name of Catholic Church I understood the Church which is upon earth, I spoke with all the Fathers. They ordinarily join to the title of “Catholic” Church, that of

“spread all over the earth,” *toto orbe diffusa*. To this title of Catholic they join also the title of Apostolic; and thus is it put in the Nicene creed, which exhibits the most authentic as well as the most perfect interpretation of the Apostles’ creed. This title of Apostolic makes part of the Church’s Catholicity, and shows us, amongst other things, that she is descended from the apostles by the perpetual succession of her pastors, and by the episcopal sees established over all the earth. All the saints whose blessed souls are with God were conceived in this Church; all those that are to come shall likewise be regenerated in it: so that there never shall be any one who has not made an essential part of this body, of which Jesus Christ is the head. As to the angels, if we regard only the direct signification of words; they never made part of this Church founded by the apostles and spread over all the earth, where she is to make her pilgrimage: and although Jesus Christ is their head, he is in a more particular manner that of the faithful, washed in his blood and renovated by his word. But the angels, though united to Jesus Christ in *another* manner, are our brethren, and are not alien from the Catholic Church, of which on the contrary, they are established, after their manner, co-operators and ministers. It is an evident truth, but with which I had nothing to do in this place; it was sufficient to remark in the creed, what our fathers found there expressly and immediately signified by the term Catholic Church, by adding to it the title Apostolic, so natural to her Catholicity, and the eulogium of being spread all over the earth. To know the doctrine of this Church, is to know the doctrine of all the creed. There is seen in heaven and in the brightness of the saints,* only what is believed in this Church, and the holy angels, who, as the apostle St. Paul says,† have learned by the Church such high secrets of the divine wisdom, respect her belief. Thus, all being reduced, as I have already said, to the visibility, M. Claude’s only object is to make me lose time and digress, in calling on me to treat here of any thing else in order to make known this Catholic Church, which is confessed in the creed.

All that remains for me to do is, to exhort the professors of the “Reformed” religion, and M. Claude himself, if he will permit me, to draw manifest conclusions, from the principles he has laid down: then they will no longer be able to resist the truth, and will remain convinced that there is no salvation for them, but in returning to the bosom of the Roman Church.

We have seen‡ that, to verify the promises of the gospel, M.

* Ps. cix. 3:

† Eph. iii. 10.

‡ *Supra*, page 97.

Claude is obliged to acknowledge an ever visible Church, because the Church which is not visible is no Church, and because, according to the definition he has given us, "the Church is the true believers, who make profession of the Christian truth under a ministry which furnishes her with the aliments necessary for spiritual life."* These faithful are not then a body in the air, because they make *profession of the truth under an ecclesiastical ministry* always subsisting, and because, as we have seen, there must be, without any interruption, an exterior profession, of which it may be said,—“There are the true believers.”

Thus it is not sufficient vaguely to allege to us hidden believers: it is incumbent to show us, without interruption, *first*, a visible society, of which may be said—“They are there: it is there they serve God in spirit and truth; it is there they confess the gospel.”

Nor will it be enough to show these believers dispersed; they must, *secondly*, show us them gathered together, under the authority of an ecclesiastical ministry, with the preaching of the word, with the administration of the sacraments, with the use of the keys, and all the ecclesiastical government.

By consequence, they must show us a society of pastors and people: whence it follows, in the *third* place, they must be able to name us these pastors, since the succession of them is manifest.

To seek all this in the pretended Reformed Church, as it is now, separated from the Roman Church—that is, from *that body of the Church which acknowledges the Roman Church and the Pope for its head*,—is what M. Claude does not so much as dream of; it is enough for him, that to the time of the pretended Reformed's separation, he finds all this in the Roman Church itself. The true believers were there as long as those that composed the pretended Reformation were there: when they went forth, they carried the Church with them, as M. Claude said in the Conference.†

This discourse, more like raillery than a serious discourse, is nevertheless that which is seriously held in the new Reformation. Up to the separation of these new Reformed, the succession of the true believers—that is, according to M. Claude, of the true visible Church—was perpetuated in the Roman Church, and it is only *since* their separation that she has ceased to contain them. Such is the succession of the visible Church, which M. Claude establishes in his manuscript answer. Up to the separation, the true faithful that the Roman Church contained: after

* *Supra*, page 101.

† Page 58.

the separation, the "Reformed" that came forth from the midst of her.

But, whence came their pastors? Did they also separate, with these pretended believers, from the body of the Roman Church, to perpetuate in the Church, thus Reformed, the ecclesiastical ministry? In nowise: M. Claude does not understand it so. The faithful, dissociated from the Roman Church, all on a sudden deposed the pastors that were before; that is to say, that before, Catholic bishops and priests, with the Pope at their head, were the pastors established by Jesus Christ (for there must have been such for "the true believers," which they contained in their unity): at the moment that the Reformation appeared, they were all summarily deposed, and the ministry is withdrawn from their hands.

But what right had private persons thus all summarily and in one moment to dispossess all their pastors? It is because they are the true believers, to whom "the ministry appertains of right,"* who might consequently dispose of it, take it from some and give it to others. "We must not," says M. Claude, "imagine the succession of pastors in this ordinary transmission, which ministers make from one to another, and which is called the exterior and personal succession. The question is, whether it may not sometimes happen, that the Church—that is, the true believers—shall take her ministry out of the hand of those who have too visibly abused it, and give it to others."

This is the question in general, as M. Claude proposes it; and the application he makes of it in particular is, that "the Latin prelates who occupied the ecclesiastical ministry in the time of our fathers, and who were assembled in the Council of Trent, having made decisions of faith incompatible with salvation, and having pronounced anathemas against those who submitted not to them, the Reformed had reason to regard these prelates as ministers who had stripped themselves of the ministry, and to give it to other persons."† They should then, at least, according to these principles, have waited till the decisions of Trent; and since, *before* these decisions, so many Churches separated from Rome had already given themselves pastors, the Reformation will have begun by a manifest usurpation. But let us not push M. Claude so much, and without insisting rigorously on the Council of Trent, let us desire him only to mark some day a little near the time in which he will allow the true believers to have continued under the ministry of the Roman Church. And in the meantime, let us content ourselves

* *Supra*, page 98.

† See note D.

with noting this novel doctrine, that it may happen that all the pastors of the Church, dispossessed all on a sudden, may become in one moment private men, and that, without their establishing any other pastors to succeed them, "the true believers," in no-wise pastors, but private persons, separated from every Church actually existing, may of their sole authority confer the ministry on others, establish them, ordain them, and instal them. This is what M. Claude propounds in the sequel, in these words,—that these pastors, the only ones before in office, "are of right deprived, and the ministry reverted, of right, to that part of the society in which are found the true believers;" that is to say, the so-styled Reformed, separated from the Roman Church, and from *the whole Church then subsisting in the world*. What an authority and privilege does separation give!

Such is M. Claude's doctrine. If I alter, if I exaggerate, if I extenuate, let him without delay publish his treatise to confound me. But, if this be his doctrine, I conjure the Reformed to consider what monstrous doctrine must be taught to defend their Reformation.

For, *first*: Where do they read—in what gospel, in what epistle, in what Scripture of the Old or the New Testament—that all the pastors of the Church were to fall in a moment from their chair, and become private persons, whom one might and ought freely to disobey?

Has Jesus Christ hidden this great mystery from us? and would he not have forewarned us against this fearful temptation of his Church? But this is not all: after having shown us in the Scripture this universal fall of all the pastors, they must also find there this "ministry's *reverting*, of right," to private persons, who were never *vested* with it. And what is M. Claude's meaning? Is it that these private persons become of right ministers, without receiving ordination from any one; or that, without being ministers, they have a right of their sole authority to set up ministers in the Church? Let them show it in the Scripture, or let them for ever renounce the pretence of having the Scripture alone for guide.

I find in the Scripture, that Jesus Christ said to his apostles, "As my Father sent me, so I send you;"* I find in the Scripture, that the apostles, thus sent, send others, and consecrate men to succeed them† but that, all their successors being on a sudden fallen and deprived of the right of their ministry, this ministry of right reverts to the faithful, *to whom no one had ever given it*,—to dispose of at their pleasure,—this neither Scripture

* John xx. 21.

† Titus i. 5, &c.

has said, nor after-ages imagined ; the notion is a monster, the birth of which was reserved for the new Reformation.

The ministry, say they, belongs of right to the Church. Unquestionably, it does belong to the Church, as the eyes do to the body. The ministry is not for itself, no more than the eyes. The ministry is established to be the light of the Church, as the eyes are the light, or, as Jesus Christ calls them, the lamp of the body.* Does it follow that, when the body has lost its eyes, it can re-make them of itself? No, certainly ; it will have need of the Hand which made them at first ; and nothing but a new creation can ever repair the work that the first creation had formed. In the same manner, if the Catholic Church could, agreeably to the pretence of the new Reformation, lose all on a sudden all its ministers, without their having given themselves successors according to the order of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ must come again on earth to re-establish this sacred order by a new creation.

They are ready enough to discover in the bosom of the Roman Church those true believers to make up the Reformed Church at its commencement ; why will they not in like manner derive the pastors of this Reformed Church from the pastors that were in office in the Roman Church ? As the people, so also the ministry is to be of a mixed character ; and there are always to be good pastors amongst the bad, as there are always true believers amongst false Christians. Why then were they fain to say in the new Reformation, and in the 31st article of their confession of faith, “ that the state of the Church was interrupted ? ” Why were they fain to have recourse to “ men extraordinarily raised to build the Church anew, which was in ruin and desolation ? ” The reason is this, they were fain to speak not according to what ought to be done in the order established by Jesus Christ, but according to what *was* done against all order. The reason is, that the men of the new Reformation constituted for themselves pastors, who in effect had no connection with the pastors that were before in office, and therefore they were necessitated, even against their will, to attribute to them, though without proof, an extraordinary vocation. But, after all, reason required something else : and why did they not speak according to reason, except, (once more) because they were fain to accommodate, not what was done to the rule, but, the rule to what was done.

But, it will be said, if any Church—for example the Greek Church—show us the succession of her pastors, will you hold

* Luke xi. 34—36.

it for a true Church? By no means, if I can show in it other marks of innovation which it cannot deny, as I could do without much trouble, if it were in question. But with our Reformed, the proof is made; since themselves confess the interruption we charge them with.

M. Claude palliates, as well as he can, "this interrupted state of the Church," so distinctly acknowledged in his confession of faith. "We distinguish," says he, "the Church from her *state*. The Church are the true believers, who make profession of Christian truth, of piety, and of a real sanctity, under a ministry which furnishes them with the aliments necessary for spiritual life, without depriving them of any one. Her natural and legitimate *state* is to be discharged, as much as the condition of 'militant' can permit, from the impure mixture of profane persons and worldlings; not to be overlaid, and, as it were, buried by that chaff and those tares, whence a thousand evils come upon her; to have a ministry free from errors, from false worships, from superstitious practices—a ministry filled by good men, who hold it by worthy means, and serve themselves as a good example. It is *this state* of the Church which we deem to have been interrupted." Why does he incumber himself with so many words, and because they are pompous, not observe that they are vain, not to say fallacious, and manifestly contrary to the gospel? For, can a more evident cheat be put on the world, than by exaggerating, as is here done, "this ministry filled by good men, who hold it by worthy means, and serve themselves as a good example?" Is it that the authority of the ecclesiastical ministry depends on the discussion of the life and good example of those who are vested with it? and though they should be as scandalous and perverse as the Scribes and Pharisees, ought we not still to say (not as Jesus Christ said, they sit in *Moses'* chair, but, what is more august), they sit in the chair of **JESUS CHRIST** and his apostles? However, let these things pass: come we to this "interrupted state" of the 31st article, which M. Claude here undertakes to explain for us. This interrupted state of the Church is alleged here to establish the necessity of an extraordinary vocation in the pretended Reformed; for let us hear how this article speaks:—"It hath been sometimes necessary, and especially in these our days, wherein the state of the Church was interrupted, that God should raise up men after an extraordinary manner, to set up the Church anew." You see, Protestants, this interrupted state of the Church is alleged only to establish the extraordinary vocation of your first Reformers. But, in order to establish the necessity of an extraordinary vocation, it is not sufficient that the ministry is impure; the ministry

must have ceased. When you made your appearance, had this ecclesiastical ministry ceased? Assuredly not, M. Claude will answer you, for then the Church would have ceased; since the Church, according to him, as you just now heard, is nothing else but "the true believers, who make profession of the truth, under a ministry which furnishes her with necessary aliments." Besides, he has already told us often, that the Church is never without the ministry. So, in this place, where he endeavors to give an account of this "interrupted state," after having set forth in such striking terms, the impurity which he imagines in the ministry before the Reformation, "The Church," adds he, "ceased not; she did not entirely lose her visibility or her ministry; God forbid! See how he cries out against this abomination of saying that the ministry can be lost in the Church. Then, there is never any necessity of an extraordinary vocation in the ministers, since to transmit the ministry after the ordinary manner, it is not requisite for the ministry to be pure, it is sufficient that it exists. And though for the transmitting of it there should be required, as M. Claude affirms, not only ministers of good doctrine, but also of "good life and good example," it is as sure that there will always be such in the society of the people of God as it is sure that there will be always true believers; since all the ministry, as well as the people, must be there mixed of good and bad, until the final separation and the last judgment. Thus the extraordinary vocation is on all sides excluded from Jesus Christ's Church and can be only a weak refuge for a desperate cause.

And to see what a disturbance of the order established by Jesus Christ, M. Claude here introduces, we need only consider the promises of Jesus Christ, and see in what it has pleased him that the main strength of his Church should reside. She is strong, she is invincible, because Jesus Christ has said that hell shall not prevail against her; but he did not say that "hell should not prevail against her," until after he had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church;" adding, presently after, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."* It is then in the ministry, confessing and declaring Jesus Christ; and using the authority of the keys, that Jesus Christ has mainly lodged the strength of his Church. And to whom did he say, I am with you, even to the end of the world,† but to those to whom he said, Teach and baptize? The whole Church is comprehended in this promise, as we all know. But it was the design of Jesus Christ to evidence the truth of the

* Matt. xvi. 18.

† Matt. xxviii. 20.

doctrine so well set forth by St. Cyprian,—the Church forsakes not Jesus Christ, and *this* is the Church, the people united with their bishop, and the flock joined to their pastor :* where it is clear that we must understand, as he says elsewhere,† this pastor united with his colleagues, and with the whole unity of the episcopacy so often established in his writings. It is then with reason that Jesus Christ would show the succession of his Church by that of the ministry ; and it is manifestly seen, that it was his design to say to those who teach, “ I am always with you.” And what is here more admirable is, that these promises are so evident, that M. Claude (against the prepossessions of his religion) was forced to acknowledge them such as I have now explained them. For we have heard him tell us that it is, in effect, of a confessing Church, of a Church which publishes the faith, of a Church which uses the ministry, that Jesus Christ has pronounced, that hell should not prevail against her. And because Jesus Christ, after he had said, Teach and baptize, adds, “ I am with you,” M. Claude concludes,‡ as we do, that Jesus Christ, in effect, points out a Church, to whom he gives the assurance that he will be with her, baptize with her, and teach with her without interruption unto the end of the world. It is then the succession and perpetuity of the ministry which is principally comprehended in this promise : it is principally in this that Jesus Christ lodges the strength and everlasting duration of his Church. And yet, in contradiction to all this order, the ministry is represented to us so weak and so forsaken by Jesus Christ as to fall altogether in one moment ; and, on the other hand, private individuals among the faithful are represented so strong, that they alone establish all the ministry extraordinarily raised, without having regard either to the succession or to the authority of all the preceding administration. Who, then, does not see that all is overturned in the new Reformation ? and that to say with them, that it pleased God to preserve true believers in his

* [Loquitur illic (John vi. 68) Petrus super quem ædificatâ fuerat Ecclesia ; Ecclesiæ nomine docens et ostendens, quia etsi contumax ac superba obaudire volentium multitudo discedat, Ecclesia tamen a Christo non recedit, et illi sunt Ecclesia plebs sacerdoti adunata, et pastori suo grex adhærens. Unde scire debes Episcopum in Ecclesiâ esse, et Ecclesiam in Episcopo ; et si qui cum Episcopo non sint, in Ecclesiâ non esse ; et frustra sibi blandiri eos, qui pacem cum sacerdotibus Dei non habentes obrepunt, et latenter apud quosdam communicare se credunt ; quando Ecclesia, quæ Catholica una est, scissa non sit, neque divisa, &c.—Epist. lxvi. ad Flor. Pupian. Ed. Oxon. p. 168.]

† [Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.—De Unit. Eccles. p. 108.—Episcopatus unus, Episcoporum multorum concordii numerositate diffusus. . . Episcopatum autem tenere non posset, etiam si episcopus prius factus, a cœpiscoporum suorum corpore et ab Ecclesiæ unitate descisceret.—Epist. lv. ad Anton. p. 112.]

‡ See page 100.

Church, to depose by their means all the pastors, and afterwards set up others extraordinarily in their place—whereas he was not pleased to preserve good pastors, to transmit the ministry by the common ways established in his word, and always observed in his Church—is to say that he would set up a Church in a manner contrary to that he revealed, and has always caused to be followed by his Church. Or rather, it is to say that he would have this Church, formed after a manner so unprecedented amongst Christians, bear in its origin, without ever being able to efface it, the manifest stamp of its falsity.

But let us come to those “true believers,” whom M. Claude parades before us. I do not rest satisfied with disputing them the power he has given them, of deposing all their pastors, and making others: I affirm that *these* “true believers,” never existed. However, they must, by M. Claude’s admission, have been true believers, even in the bosom of the Roman Church; for since, according to his doctrine, there must be acknowledged, without any interruption, an ecclesiastical ministry and an outward profession,* of which might have been said, “There are the true believers,” they were true believers under that ministry, and in that profession whence they went forth. I ask, did they join in the sacrifice where saints are invoked, where their relics and images are honored, where the Pope is named as the head of the orthodox, where Jesus Christ is adored as present in body and soul, where he is offered, where the Holy Sacrament is received under one kind? Not to join in this sacrifice, and to refuse receiving the eucharist there, would have been a declared separation; and they are supposed not to have done that yet: but if they joined therein, continuing all the while “true believers,” in what an error are now all our Reformed, who deem themselves true believers only since their ceasing to participate therein?

Thus, these true believers are people in the air; these “seven thousand,” so much boasted of † in the new Reformation and by M. Claude, are not merely invisible, they have no existence: since before the separation there was no one who did not participate in the sacrifice and host, which our Reformed look upon as Baal, before whom one must not bow the knee.

They say that these “true believers,” who, by their actual separating, composed the Reformation, were previously separated *in heart* from the public idolatry. But, *first*: this is not sufficient. *Secondly*: it is untrue.

This is not sufficient, according to M. Claude: since he as-

* See p. 98.

† Page 26 *et seq.*

signs perpetual visibility to the Church; since he has just now defined the Church to be the "true believers, who make profession of the truth, of piety, of real sanctity;"* wheresoever, therefore, the *profession* is wanting, there are neither true believers nor a true Church.

But, moreover, the allegation is manifestly at variance with the fact. Else, when Luther appeared and Zuinglius innovated, their disciples must have made this declaration:—" *Thus have we always believed; always had we our heart averse from the Roman Faith, and from the Pope, and from bishops, and from the real presence, and from confession, and from communion under one kind, and from relics, and from images, and from prayers to saints, and from the merit of works.*" Where are those who spoke in this manner? Can M. Claude name us a single one? On the contrary, are not all these Reformed seen, at every page of their writings, to speak as newly retired out of the darkness of the papacy? and does not Luther glory, at their head, that he was the **FIRST** who declared the gospel? All the Reformed applauded him, except Zuinglius, who disputes this honor with him. He in the meantime acknowledges that he was the sincerest monk; the priest most intent upon his sacrifice; and, in a word, the "most zealous of all the papists." Do not the others use the same language? Where, then, are these true believers of M. Claude's, who not only durst not declare their faith whilst they were in the bosom of the Roman Church, but after they were gone out of it, durst not say they had always held in their heart the same faith?

But here is a peremptory confutation of the new Reformation. In the definition that M. Claude just now gave us of the true Church, he says, "It is the true believers, who make profession of the Christian truth under a ministry which furnishes her with necessary aliments, without depriving her of any one." If before the Reformation there was no such Church, the true Church no longer was, which militates against M. Claude's supposition; and if there was such a Church, where "profession was made of the truth, and which by her ministry furnished necessary aliments to the children of God, without depriving them of *any one*," what need was there of a separation on the part of self-styled Reformed?

Was it, forsooth, that the practice of saying mass had been suddenly taken up, and the teaching of all those doctrines which our Reformed have alleged as the cause of their rupture? The very idea would be the utmost absurdity. Or perhaps, whilst

* Supra, p. 108.

teaching all these doctrines, the Church had not yet thought of excommunicating those that opposed them. Whence then came so many anathemas against Berengarius, against the Waldenses and Albigenses, against John Wycliffe and John Huss, whom our Reformed would reckon amongst their ancestors? What then! Had not those who before the pretended Reformation made profession of the Christian truth—that is, according to M. Claude, of the “Reformed” doctrine—yet found out how to make a schism? and was all the world agreed to bear with them? But, even were all this true, the case of the Reformation would not be bettered in any respect; because, after all, before it came into existence there must be acknowledged to have existed a ministry where—without teaching either that the sinner is justified by faith alone and the sole imputation of Jesus Christ’s justice, or that God in the New Testament abhors sacrifices celebrated in a sensible matter, or that He alone would be invoked, to the exclusion of that inferior and subordinate prayer which is addressed to saints, or, in fine, without *any* of these articles which distinguish our Reformed from us, although they rest their salvation on them—“the children of God were furnished with all the aliments necessary for spiritual life, without being deprived of *any one*.” What has the Reformation wrought, if all these things be not necessary aliments; if even the sacred cup, and consequently the Lord’s Supper, which according to our pretended Reformed, cannot subsist without the cup, be none of these aliments necessary to the Christian’s faith? What needless vexations have been endured, how preposterous have been all these commotions, and prodigal the waste of blood, if these things be not necessary!

Perhaps these necessary aliments must be reduced to the Apostles’ Creed, or in general to the Scripture. But the Socinian Church retains this creed and this Scripture; so that the ministry of a Socinian Church would, according to this rule, “have furnished the children of God with all necessary aliments, without depriving them of one.” What then at last will these necessary aliments be? and if they are furnished without the subtraction of any one, merely by proposing the Creed and the Scripture, no matter what else be taught;—in what heresy have they been wanting?

The more M. Claude endeavors here to disengage himself, the more he is entangled. For, after he has established as a fundamental truth, that “God always preserves in the ministry all that is necessary to nourish there the true believers, and bring them to salvation,” he says, it does not thence follow “that the ministry is exempt from all error,” even in its decisions; but

that, "either they do not materially affect conscience, or even supposing they affect salvation, men use liberty of conscience to reject the evil and preserve what is pure." At this rate, all would be reduced to liberty of conscience, and what error soever may be taught in the ministry, provided they force none to follow their decisions, and suffer all contrary doctrine, good or bad, it is enough to make M. Claude say that "the ministry furnishes the children of God with all necessary aliments, without depriving them of any of them." But, according to this pretension, there would be no society whose ministry should better furnish all necessary aliments than a society of Socinians, who make it their boast that they will condemn no one. If it be said amongst our Reformed that a Socinian Church overthrows the foundation by denying the divinity of Jesus Christ; it is also said there, that it was no less overthrown, before their Reformation, by the idolatries, which, as they say, reigned every where. And if they contend, after all, that it is more dangerous to destroy the foundation by subtraction (with the Socinians), than (with the Roman Church) by these pretended additions which they call idolatry,—besides all the subtraction we have just now shown there, according to the principles of the Reformed, and even before their Reformation, it were an unheard of extravagance to believe that it would be more easy for these true believers, who had to make the distinction of doctrines under a ministry full of errors, to cut off what is superfluous, than to supply what is defective, or that the foundation of the faith is more certainly overthrown by diminishing than by adding; the Scripture having so often comprehended under one common malediction as well those that diminish as those that add.*

It would, therefore, be more to M. Claude's purpose to set aside all this ministry and the perpetual visibility of the Church, and say, that it is, in fine, sufficient—all this visibility being overthrown—that God has preserved the Holy Scripture, where the faithful, whether concealed or undisguised, whether dispersed or united, whether always subsisting or sometimes wholly extinct, shall clearly find, according to his principles, without any need of the ministry, "all necessary aliments." For, indeed, what use is a ministry to them in which error has the ascendancy? and would not the Scripture alone be more commodious and more instructive to them? This is what Protestants should say, to keep clear of the intricacies in which we involve them. But M. Claude neither durst nor ever will dare to do so, because he would have to face difficulties yet more insupportable.

* Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32; Rev. xxii. 18, &c.

ble and more manifest. The truth, in a word, is this : he feels that by pushing the authority and sufficiency, as I may say, of the Scripture, independently of all the ecclesiastical ministry, they must at last destroy the Scripture itself.

For he has found in Scripture, that the Scripture was not intended to be, like the philosophy of Plato, the rule of an ideal republic, but of a people always existing, which this Scripture calls "the Church." He has found that this people was to be always visible on earth, as being "not only to believe with the heart, but also to confess with the mouth,"* and, to use his own terms, "make profession of the Christian truth." He has found that the Scripture was intrusted in the hands of such a people, to be the unchangeable rule thereof; that there should always be interpreters established by God, the author of this Scripture as well as the founder of this people; and that so the ministry destined by God to this interpretation was as everlasting as the Church itself.

If he expresses this solemn assurance, "God always preserves in the public ministry all that is necessary for the guidance of true believers to salvation," he cannot found this assurance on any human industry. Should God leave the ecclesiastical ministry to itself, it must fall. If then it be warrantably asserted that "God will always keep there all that is necessary for salvation," God himself must have so promised, and the everlasting duration of the ministry cannot be founded but on this promise. M. Claude also finds it in those words, "Thou art Peter," &c. It is from this text he concludes, as we do, that Jesus Christ, in speaking "to a Church that confesses," and confesses, indubitably, by her principal ministers (since it is by St. Peter in the name of the apostles), "to a Church connected with an external ministry and using the power of the keys," has promised her that "hell should not prevail against her,"—against her, consequently, when supported by this ministry: and therefore he affirms "that God preserves always in the public ministry all that is necessary to the salvation of his children."

Another promise of Jesus Christ, directed to those that baptize and those that teach, and concluded by these powerful words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the world,"† makes M. Claude, as well as us, say, "that Jesus Christ promises the Church to be with her, to baptize with her, and *to teach with her, without interruption, even to the end of the world.*" Thus, he admits that our Lord's promise regards the Church as connected with the ecclesiastical ministry;

* Rom. x. 10.

† Matt. xxviii. 20.

and this brings him also to conclude "that Jesus Christ never suffers corruption in the ministry in that degree as not to leave sufficient aids to the maintenance of the *true faith* of his elect, even to the end of the world."

In fine, a third passage, to wit, that of St. Paul to the Ephesians,* makes him conclude, with us, "that the ministry will last even to the end of the world, and continue in a degree and in a state sufficient to edify the body of Christ, and bring all the elect to the perfection of which St. Paul speaks." This, then, must be the work of God: without His ever-abiding assistance, it were vain to expect either such a stability or such an integrity in the ministry.

After such a beginning, the work of faith should have been completed, glory given to God even to the end. M. Claude was not far from the kingdom of God when he said that God would sufficiently overrule human infirmity, to preserve always, despite of the efforts of hell, a Church which should confess the truth, and an exterior ministry which should furnish true believers with the aliments necessary to salvation. He ought, then, to carry out the principle, and believe that the same hand which would hinder hell from prevailing so far against the ministry as to deprive it of these necessary aliments, would hinder it also from prevailing so far as to make any error to have dominion in it: and this he should do the more readily, because what he already believes comprehends what remains to believe. For if he believed, on the faith of the divine promise, that there should be always a Church with which Jesus Christ would not cease to teach—that is, obviously, that he would not cease to teach with the teachers of this Church—he ought, on the same grounds, to believe that he would there teach all truth; Jesus Christ not having come, nor having sent his Holy Spirit to his apostles to teach them *some* truths, but to teach them *all* truth, as himself declares in his gospel.†

Nor would it avail to contend that M. Claude promises in the ministry only *sufficient* aliments; a term which would comprise no more than the fundamentals of faith, just as our Reformed find them amongst the Lutherans. For Jesus Christ's doctrine containing nothing but what is profitable, agreeably to this text, "I am the Lord, who teacheth thee profitable things,"‡ if we find not the doctrine of Jesus Christ whole and entire in the ministry, we shall never find "that degree" required by M. Claude, nor that "state sufficient to bring all the elect to the perfection of which St. Paul speaks."

* Eph. iv. 12.

† John xvi. 13.

‡ Isaiah xlviii. 17.

It would, then, be something to believe that by the promise God would always keep all essential truths, without interruption, in the ministry; for it would be to acknowledge in the Church, with which Jesus Christ teaches, a beginning of infallible authority, by acknowledging this authority, at least, in respect of the first truths of Christianity; but to complete the work, and not to believe by halves, we must also believe that Jesus Christ, in teaching, teaches *all*, and confess in his Church an absolute infallibility.

Accordingly, we should not say, with the ministers and their incredulous flock :—" This ecclesiastical ministry is composed of men, liable to err; one may doubt after them." For, this would be to yield to temptation and no longer to believe the promise. We should say, It consists of men with whom Jesus Christ promises to be and teach always: then, notwithstanding human weakness and all the endeavors of hell, "against hope, we believe in hope,"* that we shall ever find in their common preaching not *some* truths, or only the *principal* truths, but the *entire fulness* of Christian truths. Let men say what they will, it is not believing blindly, to believe thus; or it is believing blindly like Abraham, on the word of God himself, and the faith of his promises.

How insupportable, then, is the doctrine of M. Claude, who, after acknowledging so many splendid promises of Jesus Christ in favor of this sacred ministry, suddenly plunging again, I know not how, into the darkness of his sect, whence he was beginning to emerge, represents the ministry so abandoned by Jesus Christ, that there is no remedy for its errors, but the deposing at once of all those who occupy the pastoral chair! What agreement have those promises, so well acknowledged, with so universal a corruption?

M. Claude, then, need only hearken a little to himself to come over to us, after having acknowledged, in virtue of the divine promises, the everlasting duration of the ecclesiastical ministry in this "sufficient state," of which he speaks. To find all truth there, he need only consider that this imperfect assistance, and, so to speak, this half succour of Jesus Christ to his Church, is neither befitting His wisdom nor His power; being moreover assured, that there is no true sufficiency in the ministry but by the full manifestation of the truth revealed by God, agreeably to this saying of the apostle, "By manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" whence he concludes, presently after, that "if our gos-

* Rom. iv. 18.

pel"—that is, most certainly, our preaching—"be hid, it is hid to them that perish:" to the end he may make us understand, that the preaching, always clear and always sincere in the Catholic Church, has no obscurity but in rebels, of whom the devil, "the god of this world," and the spirit of pride, "hath blinded the minds," as the same apostle proceeds, "lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them."*

It is now easy to see that all M. Claude's subtilties serve only to confound him. What does he gain by endeavoring, after acknowledging the Church's perpetual visibility, to elude the consequences of this doctrine, by reducing the Church to the true believers? He shall have free allowance to do so: wherever he finds "Church," let him understand "the true believers;" let him, if he please, even expound these words,—“tell it unto the Church,” tell it to the *true believers*, single them out amongst the troop, and judge before the Lord; or because, as himself acknowledges, here is too apparently meant "the Church represented by her pastors," let him say that these pastors represent the true believers who are not known, and act in their name. What will these explanations, after all, avail him? since, after all, according to his own doctrine, this true Church will always be found visible, and these true believers always under a public ministry, from which Jesus Christ, far from allowing his Church to separate, immediately subjoins to these words, "tell it unto the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man," a declaration of the efficiency of the ministry, for the purpose of showing how awful is the judgment of the Church,—“whatsoever you bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven,” and the rest, which every one knows. Thus I deduce in any case precisely the same inference, that the Church, which must be shown *without interruption*, whether it be only the true believers, or, if they will, only the elect; or whether it be, in a certain sense, the wicked mixed with them, and those that "believe for awhile," according to the expression of the gospel,† is a Church always gathered under a visible ministry, and a body, always subsisting, of people with their pastors, where the truth is preached, "not in secret, but on the housetops."‡ Let them turn as much as they will, it is a Church of this nature and this constitution we must at all times show, by M. Claude's admission. To make her disappear for one sole moment, is utterly to annihilate her and to overthrow the promises of the gospel, in what they have most striking and splendid; to make her appear always, is invincibly to establish the Roman Church.

* 2 Cor. iv. 2—4.

† Matt. xiii. 21.

‡ Matt. x. 27.

Thus, what M. Claude so elaborately propounds, besides being false, leaves the difficulty unabated, and his cause in as bad a condition as it was before his defence. But that it may not be said that we have confined ourselves to the business of refuting him, let us tell him the truth in a few words. The main body of the Church are the true believers, and those principally, who, "persevering to the end," abide eternally in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ in them—that is, the elect. The wicked, who environ them, are, after their manner, comprehended under the name of Church, as the nails, as the hair, as an eye put out, and a withered arm, which perhaps receives no more nourishment, is comprehended under the name of body. All is for those true believers. The ministry under which they live is theirs in the same sense that St. Paul said,* "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas." Not that the power of their pastors comes from them, or that they alone can set them up and depose them; God forbid! This pastoral and apostolic power comes from Him who said, "As my Father hath sent me, so also I send you.† Hence St. Paul, in the chapter just cited, asks, "Who then is Apollo, and who is Paul? The ministers of Him whom you have believed, and to every one as God hath given Him:‡ to you to be believers, and to us to be pastors. "Wherefore," he adds further, "we are God's laborers,"§ or, to say better, co-operators. These ministers and these workers established by God are also the ministers of the faithful, and in this sense are *theirs*, because they are "their servants, in Jesus Christ,"|| established in the chair, not for themselves, for as to them it would suffice to be simple believers, but to edify the saints. He that desires to be in the communion of saints need not anxiously toil to distinguish them from others: for though they are known and perfectly discerned but by God alone, we are sure to find them under the public ministry, and in the external profession of the Catholic Church. We need then only stay there to be assured to find the saints; because this profession, and the ever-fruitful word of preachers, which never fails to engender some, keeps them always inseparably united to the holy society where they received it. Wherefore, when Jesus Christ promises to teach always with his Church, he comprehends all in this word; and rendering, by virtue of this promise, the Church infallible exteriorly in the manifestation of the truth, renders her interiorly fruitful. If the preachers of the truth be, by their corrupt living, unworthy of their

* 1 Cor. iii. 22.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 9.

† John xx. 21.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

ministry, God makes use of them, notwithstanding, to sanctify his faithful ; for he is able to quicken even by the dead, and a rotten arm can become active in his hands. Moreover, these true believers, known to God alone, animate all the ecclesiastical ministry ; a small number of these concealed saints often suffices to give effect to the prayers of a whole Church ; the conversion of sinners will oftentimes be as much the effect of their secret groans as the fruit of the most signal preaching. And thus, St. Augustin attributes the wholesome effects of the ministry to these good souls, for whom and by whom the Holy Ghost is fully in the Church. But that the ecclesiastical power therefore depends on them, is what neither St. Augustin nor any of the holy Fathers ever taught ; and M. Claude, who cites them, understands them not. Of this there will be ample evidence when he shall publish his treatise ; it is sufficient for us, in the meantime, to have shown that he is of those (and God grant he be not so for ever !) of whom St. Paul speaks, that condemn themselves.*

This, in fact, is, according to the apostle, the true character of all heresies, and never did any society more visibly bear this character set down by St. Paul, than the so-styled Reformed Church.

She condemns herself, when, not daring to affirm that she is infallible, she sees herself, nevertheless, constrained to act as if she were, and to bear witness to the Catholic Church by imitating her.

She condemns herself, when she raises all the particular persons she teaches above her own judgment ; and forcing them, how ignorant soever they find themselves, to examine after her without rendering them capable, she renders them indocile and presumptuous.

She condemns herself, since, vaunting of the Scriptures, she finds not in herself authority enough to make them be received by her followers on her word ; but leaves her own children, to whom she presents them to be read, in the uncertainties of a human faith.

She condemns herself, when, forced to own that she was not established but by breaking with all the Christian Churches which were in the world, she gives herself the proper character of all false Churches.

In fine, she condemns herself, when, forced to own the perpetual visibility of the Church in the indefectibility of the ministry, she cannot maintain herself without acknowledging besides

* Titus iii. 2.

a universal corruption in the ministry, nor without authorizing private persons against the whole succession of the Apostolic order.

Now, if she condemns herself in so many ways, how happy would it be for her to condemn herself once for all by returning into the bosom of the Catholic Church, which never ceases to recal her to her unity.

Let not Protestants any longer reproach us with the abuses which make us sigh. The evils of the Church are ill-remedied by adding that of schism. Are *they* so happy, or, to say better, so haughty and blind, as to find nothing to deplore amongst themselves? And will they authorize so many sects, gone forth out of their bosom, who, complaining of *their* disorders in the same spirit of proud discontent with which they heretofore so much exaggerated *ours*, daily separate from *them* as *they* did from *us*? Why do they not rather hear charity itself, unity itself, and the Catholic Church, which warns them by the mouth of St. Cyprian: "Persuade not yourselves, dear brethen and children, that you can ever defend the gospel of Jesus Christ by separating from his flock, from his unity, and from his peace. Good soldiers, that complain of the disorders they see in the army, ought to stay in the camp to remedy them by common advice under the authority of the captain in the field," (and not go thence to expose the army, thus disunited, to the invasions of the enemy). "Since then ecclesiastical unity ought not to be broken, and since, moreover, we cannot leave the Church to go to you, return, return rather to the Church your mother and to our fraternity, to which we exhort you with all the earnestness of a true brotherly love."* Amen. Amen.

* [Nec putetis sic vos Evangelium Christi asserere, dum vosmetipsos a Christi grege, et ab ejus pace et concordia separatis; cum magis militibus gloriosis et bonis, congruat intra domestica castra consistere, et intus positos ea quæ in commune tractanda sunt, agere ac providere. Nam cum unanimitas et concordia nostra scindi omnino non debeat, quia nos Ecclesia derelicta foras exire, et ad vos venire non possumus, ut vos magis ad Ecclesiam matrem et ad nostram fraternitatem revertamini, quibus possumus hortamentis petimus et rogamus.—Ep. xlv. Ed. Oxon. p. 89.]

APPENDIX.

Note A. referred to at page 38.

A SHORT historical illustration of the subject glanced at in the text may not be unwelcome to the reader.

From the year 351, the emperor Constantius had actively abetted the heresy condemned at the council of Nice, in Bithynia, twenty-six years before. After numberless aggressions on the peace of the Church and invasions of spiritual authority, he summoned, in the year 359, a council of bishops of the West to meet at Ariminum (Rimini), a city on the coast of the Adriatic, at the same time convening those of the East to hold a simultaneous council at Seleucia, the metropolis of Isauria.

Both synods were numerous attended. One hundred and sixty sat at Seleucia, whilst a considerably greater number, whose amount is variously stated, were assembled at Rimini.

The emperor had determined to bend both councils to his purpose. He appointed the treasurer Leonas to act as his commissary at the Eastern council, the prefect Taurus to discharge a similar office at Rimini: giving a special injunction to the latter, not to allow the bishops to separate till they had come to an agreement on doctrine, and insuring his subserviency by a promise of the consulship.

The Western council opened in July. Its beginnings were auspicious. The Nicene Creed was read and approved: the formularies which the inconstant and conflicting innovators had set forth were rejected; and "the blasphemies of Arius, together with all heresies that had hitherto arisen against Catholic and Apostolic doctrine," were solemnly and explicitly anathematized. The overwhelming majority of the members were orthodox, although the Arian party, headed by the Illyrian bishops Valens and Ursacius, was far from inconsiderable. These with two others, Caius and Germinianus, the council formally condemned and cut off from ecclesiastical communion. The remainder of their adherents seem to have acquiesced in the doctrinal decisions which *they* pertinaciously resisted.

Ten bishops were now despatched to the emperor, the bearers of a circumstantial account of the proceedings, in a letter which, in tone and spirit, was every way worthy of an episcopal assembly. It expresses the immovable adherence of the council to the ancient scriptural faith, and the resolution to abide, without alteration, diminution, or addition, by the decrees of the Nicene council. Ursacius and Valens headed a counter deputation from the Arian party. These were received with marked attention; whilst the envoys of the council were treated with neglect, baffled by delays and pretences of urgent business, and bidden by the emperor to await his return from a military expedition on which he was going to set out. A letter of frivolous ex-

cuses was sent to Rimini. To this the fathers replied with a respectful firmness, praying to be discharged from attendance, alleging the rigor of the approaching season, and the detriment to which their protracted absence would subject their flocks.

However, Constantius was true to his design of wearing out opposition by delay. After a time, the ten Catholic deputies and four of their brethren, probably the bearers of the second letter from the council, were constrained to appear at a town called Nice (or Ustodizo), in Thrace; and there by promises, menaces, and false representations of what had passed meanwhile at Seleucia, were prevailed upon to annul the decisions in which they had participated at Rimini, and to approve what they had there condemned.

This was an important step. Constantius was now to bring the council to follow the example of its deputies. Accordingly, he addressed a letter to it, calling for the suppression of the terms "substance" and "consubstantial," reproachfully censuring the course taken with the Arian dissentients, and threatening to detain all the bishops till they complied. In a second letter, he charged Taurus to give effect to this menace, and further empowered him to banish any number of the refractory not exceeding fifteen.

These threats, and various artifices used in conjunction with them, had speedily the desired influence over the majority. At first, indeed, they had repelled the too-yielding deputies, as having betrayed their trust, and disobeyed their commission; but firmness relaxed, and before long only eighteen or twenty were found who declared themselves inflexible. These were now addressed by Taurus with remonstrances and tearful entreaties. For several days their resolution was unshaken. It may be that some appearance of vacillation in the tone of the venerable Phœbadius gave encouragement to another method which proved successful in the issue.

It was represented to him and his associates, that they were sacrificing the peace and unity of the Church for the sake of a word. Valens solemnly disclaimed Arianism and anathematized its blasphemies. He averred that the profession of faith to which they demurred had been drawn up by the bishops in the East: that, were it considered to be deficient in clearness or precision, he was ready to admit any addition they might make to it. Opposition was overcome: and after a condemnation of Arius, and a declaration of the Son's likeness to the Father, to which declaration Valens appended the insidious proposition, "that the Son was not a creature as other creatures," the disgraceful compact was closed, and the council dismissed.*

The Arian faction sounded a triumph for their victory; the Catholics were grieved and exasperated by the defection of the bishops from their duty. "The world groaned and was amazed at its being Arian," to use St. Jerome's† striking expression, which, however, is not to be construed into an acknowledgment that it was so in fact: for men neither mourn over nor feel amazement at their adhesion to tenets they have embraced as true:—it is to be regarded as a complaint of the disgrace felt at the imputation of a change of doctrine, a bitter resenting of the advantage cowardly yielded to the cause of error.

St. Jerome‡ shall describe the after-conduct of the bishops. "En-

* Hermant, ii. 268—306. Möhler, ii. 210 et seq.

† Dial. adv. Luciferanos.

‡ lb.

snared as they had been by craft, they protested by the body of the Lord, and by all that is holy in the Church, that they had no suspicion of evil in their faith. We thought, said they, that the mind agreed with the words, and never apprehended that in the Church of God, where simplicity and a pure confession reside, the heart would harbor one thing, the lips utter another. We were deceived by thinking well of evil men!" The Church at large admitted this excuse, severe as was the censure not unfrequently passed on their behavior by ecclesiastical writers.* At a council held at Alexandria two years later, it was decreed, that exclusively of the prime movers and deliberate abettors of heresy, all who, whether at Rimini or elsewhere, had, whether through fraud or violence, sided with the Arians should be admitted, upon condition of their condemning Arianism and professing the faith of the council of Nice. The same healing measure was adopted in the West; and it furnished a proof, as St. Jerome remarks, that the coerced and beguiled bishops were not regarded as heretics.

The foregoing narrative will substantiate what Bossuet asserted at the Conference. It has been seen what constraint was put upon the members of the council, and how they protested against the surprise that had been put upon them by Valens and his confederates. After the anathemas which had been uttered against Arianism, and the apparently candid offers to yield every satisfaction to the scruples of Phœbadius, it will be easy to account for the insidious proposition being suffered to pass—"that the Son was not a creature as other creatures."† The more so because the Son was declared to be "God of God, the only begotten, born of the Father before all ages." This was Catholic faith. If the formulary, suppressing the word "consubstantial," affirmed the Son to be "*like* to his Father according to the Scriptures," it was not on that account unsound; ‡ although an occasion was unwarily furnished by the appended clause to an arbitrary and heterodox interpretation. The proposition, in short, is not untrue, but captious and equivocal.

However deplorable the scandal caused by the council of Rimini, and however weighty the censure passed upon the men who failed in the hour of trial, it should be remembered that the council was not œcumenical, even as regards the West; since the Bishop of Rome, the Patriarch of the West (to say nothing of his higher prerogative), was not even invited to it.

Note B. referred to at page 67.

It would be impossible to express the denial of Church authority in more emphatic terms than those of Luther.

"I say then; neither pope, nor bishop, nor any man, has a right to impose a single syllable upon any Christian man, save it be by his own consent: whatever is done otherwise, is done in a tyrannical spirit."—On the Babyl. Capt. p. 288.

* St. Ambrose in Luc. vi. 26.—Epist. 12. L. ii. (Ed. Colon.)

† Ut qui parum eos cognitos haberent, putarent bona fide ab creaturarum rerum conditione secernere filium Dei. Petavius, De Trin. ii. 12.

‡ Hear St. Hilary, one of the firmest defenders of the consubstantiality: Similem quoque Deo religiose prædicabo; similem vero ita ut similitudini hoc dictum semper anteferam, Ego et Pater unum sumus.

However, the Reformers and their complices soon became alive to the necessity of doctrinal formularies and disciplinary enactments : and history will show that as much deference was insisted on in their behalf as the ancient Church claimed for her definitions and canons. As an instance, let us take the Protestant Church of England.

In the convocation holden in London in the year 1562, Articles of Religion, thirty-nine in number, were agreed upon—"for the avoiding of diversity of opinion, and *establishing* of consent touching true religion."* They were "*approved and allowed* to be holden and executed within the realm, by the assent and consent" of Queen Elizabeth ; and by a statute passed nine years later,† and confirmed in the reign of Queen Anne,‡ a declaration of assent and subscription to all of them in presence of a bishop were required from priests or ministers. The declared purpose of this parliamentary enactment was, "that the Churches of the Queen's Majesty's dominions might be served with pastors of sound religion." And the articles were described as "only concerning the confession of a true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the sacraments."

In the reign of her successor, appeared that declaration which is still to be found in the Book of Common Prayer : a document noticeable on several accounts. James the First,§ after asserting himself to be Supreme Governor of the Church in his dominions, proceeds to "*ratify and confirm*" the Articles of Religion, and "requires the uniform profession thereof from *all* his subjects," and "prohibits the least difference from the said Articles."

About sixty years later came the Act of Uniformity. The operation of that Act is well known ; hundreds were excluded from the ministry of the Church for non-compliance with its provisions. Every beneficed person, preacher, &c., is required, under penalty of forfeiture, publicly to declare "his unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in and by the Book of Common Prayer," whereof the thirty-nine Articles of Religion form a part.

Thus far as regards the clergy, upon whom principally, although by

* Gibson's Codex, 397.

† 13 Eliz. cap. 13.

‡ A. 1705.

§ At the conference at Hampton Court (January, 1604), James showed plainly what were his notions of ecclesiastical supremacy ; and neither the language nor the conduct of the prelates was of a nature to disabuse him. Whitgift, the primate, declared that "his majesty spoke by the special assistance of God's Spirit;" Bancroft, bishop of London, protested that his heart melted with joy, "to think that they possessed a king, "such as since Christ's time the like had not been seen." But not merely the fulsome compliments, but the acts of the bishops will show that they admitted his claim to be the supreme arbiter of controversy. A question had been raised on the allowableness of lay baptism in certain cases. "The prelates argued that to prohibit lay baptism was to condemn what had been sanctioned by the apostles themselves ; that the importance of the sacrament was the foundation of the custom ; and that, although censured by the Church as a general practice, yet in cases of necessity it had always and very properly been admitted. To this, however, the king objected. He denied that the customs of an infant Church were an authority for the mature establishment, and maintained that the words of the ritual were so general as to place no limitation to the practice. Nor could he entirely agree with the bishops on the subject of baptism itself. True it was, he admitted its necessity, provided a lawful minister could be obtained ; but he did not admit that a child dying without the sacrament would be lost ; and he thought, therefore, that no private person should under any circumstances be permitted to administer it. Against these doctrines the bishops argued, but in vain, for three hours. At length, finding it useless to resist, they surrendered the point ; and a resolution was passed that all baptisms by lay hands should be prohibited."—Tierney, new ed. of Dodd's Church History, iv. 20.

no means *exclusively*, the obligation of subscription is imposed. Let us now see how the Church of England requires the laity to be minded in respect of these Articles, and in respect of herself. In the year 1603, sundry canons were drawn up. By the third of these, excommunication was denounced upon all such as should deny the Church of England to be a true and apostolic Church; by the seventh, upon those who should say, "that its government under his Majesty by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, &c., was anti-Christian or repugnant to the word of God." But without going through the long list of censures pronounced against dissidents and impugnors, it will be sufficient to cite in proof of the assertion made above, the words of the fifth canon.*

"Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that *any* of the nine-and-thirty Articles are in *any part* superstitious or *erroneous*, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto; let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the archbishop, after his *repentance* and public revocation of such his *wicked errors*."

The reader is desired to consider that the question here is not whether professing members of the establishment deem themselves bound by these enactments, or whether they, reverting to the original principle of the Reformation, admit such of the Articles as in their judgment seem agreeable to Scripture, and dissent from or neglect such as seem to be otherwise. Nor is it the question whether *they* hold to be guilty of "*wicked error*," and rank with the heathen man and the publican, all such as affirm any one or more of the multitudinous propositions contained in the formulary under consideration to be erroneous. The question, in short, turns not on the opinions of persons, but on the *constituent principle*, so to speak, of a Church. It is indeed inconceivable how a Church could, without claiming infallibility, presume to cut off summarily from Christian communion any one who should impute error to any part of its system of doctrine. This, as we have seen, the Church of England has solemnly done.

On the other hand, it appears to be a glaring inconsistency in those who recognize the competency of the Church of England so to do, to contest *in limine* as unwarrantable the censures which the council of Trent, after the example of preceding ones, pronounced against such as were refractory to its decisions. Nothing, however, is more common.

Note C. referred to at page 70.

JAMES HARMESSEN (more commonly known by the name of Arminius), was a scholar of Theodore Beza, and upon his return to his native land became successively pastor of Amsterdam, and, after some opposition, professor of divinity at Leyden. The Calvinistic body had been long distracted by internal controversies; and the decided part which he took against the rigid Predestinarian doctrine excited much hostility, especially from Gomer, his colleague in the University. Thus, a new and more violent controversy was enkindled, which the secular power endeavored in vain to extinguish.

Arminius died in 1609;† but his doctrines survived him, and found

* Gibson, 396.

† In his last will he declared his object to have been "the spread of Christian

equally skilful and undaunted champions in Uytenbogart and Episcopius. In the following year, to shield themselves from the hostility of their adversaries, the Arminians addressed a "Remonstrance" to the States, consisting of five articles. This was answered on the other side by a contra-remonstrance; and hence the two parties respectively received the name of Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants.

Repeated conferences were held, but with no satisfactory result; at length the Gomarists, patronized by the Stadtholder Maurice, Prince of Orange, who for political purposes had resolved the downfall of those who ruled the republic and of the Arminians who espoused their cause, succeeded in procuring a synod to be convened.

The Gomarist divines assembled at Dort, in November, 1618. King James, who had previously recommended the calling of the synod, sent four divines to represent the Church of England, and another to explain the doctrine of the Church of Scotland, providing them with detailed instructions for their guidance. Deputies appeared also from the churches of Hessa, Bremen, Switzerland, and the Palatinate, as well as from the United Provinces; in short, from the whole Protestant body not united with the Lutherans, with the single exception of the French, who were withheld by political motives from taking any active part in the meeting. Several days were spent in adjusting preliminaries, and at length on the 13th of December, at the thirty-first sitting, the question of doctrine began to be taken into consideration.

In the fourteenth book of his history of the VARIATIONS, Bossuet has entered fully into the discussion of the points in contest. This discussion, however, is foreign to the purpose of this note, which has for its object only historical statement. To continue the narrative in the words of the Protestant historian Mosheim—*

"The Arminian deputies proposed to begin the defence of their cause by refuting the opinions of the Calvinists, their adversaries. This proposal was rejected by the synod, which looked upon the Arminians as a set of men that lay under the charge of heresy; and, therefore, they thought it incumbent upon them first, to declare and prove their own opinions before they could be allowed to combat the sentiments of others. When all the methods employed to persuade them to submit to the manner proposed by the synod proved ineffectual, they were excluded from that assembly, and returned home, complaining bitterly of the rigor and partiality with which they had been treated. Their cause was nevertheless tried in their absence, and in consequence of a strict examination of their writings, they were pronounced guilty of pestilential errors, and condemned as corrupters of true religion. This sentence was followed by its natural effects, which were the excommunication of the Arminians, the suppression of their religious assemblies, and the deprivation of their ministers.

"In consequence of the decision of the synod, they were deprived of all their posts and employments, whether ecclesiastical or civil,—their ministers were silenced and their meetings suppressed. They refused obedience to the order by which their pastors were prohibited from performing in public their ministerial functions; and thus drew upon them-

truth, the promotion of true worship, holy living, and concord, among all of the Christian name, *excluding popery, wherein with no union of belief, no bond of affection or Christian peace could be maintained.*"

* Cent. xvii. sec. ii. chap. 3.

selves the resentment of their superiors, who punished them by fines, imprisonment, exile, and other marks of ignominy. To avoid these vexations, many of them retired to Antwerp, others fled to France; while a considerable number, accepting the invitation sent to them by Frederick, Duke of Holstein, formed a colony, which settled in the dominions of that prince, and built for themselves a handsome town called Fredrickstadt."

Note D. referred to at page 105.

Soon after the commencement of the "Reformation," originated by Luther in 1517, wishes were expressed from various quarters, and urgent solicitations addressed to the Roman See for the assembling of a general council. The political confusion which prevailed, and numerous other hindrances, which the prejudice of some writers has caused them altogether to overlook, retarded the salutary measure, and led to those frequent interruptions of the council which will be noticed in this short sketch of its history.

It was convened by Paul III. in May, 1542, but did not commence its sitting till the 13th of December, 1545. In the first seven sessions, points relating to the Holy Scriptures, original sin, free will, justification, the sacraments in general, and those of baptism and confirmation in particular, were explained and defined. The sessions took place at intervals more or less considerable: matters being meanwhile preparatively discussed in particular congregations. Questions of faith and objects of discipline were jointly considered; and in the several sessions the decrees, for the reformation of morals and ecclesiastical discipline follow the chapters and canons of doctrine. This was its uniform practice throughout.

On account of an epidemical disorder at Trent, the council was removed to Bologna. Two sessions were held in that city; they were, however, but meetings for adjournment, and finally the council was suspended in September, 1549.

Paul III. died in the following November. His successor, Julius III. re-assembled the synod in 1551. After two preparatory sessions, the council in its thirteenth and fourteenth explained the sacraments of the holy eucharist, penance and extreme unction. In the following, it invited the Protestants to attend, and in the sixteenth it was suspended on account of the wars in Germany.

The ephemeral pontificate of Marcellus II., the successor of Julius, was followed by that of Paul IV. (1555—1559). The wars and political jealousies caused a protraction of the suspension, and it was reserved for his successor Pius IV., at the instigation of his holy nephew St. Charles Borromæo, to re-assemble the council, and under the same auspicious guidance to bring its labors to a successful termination. The council was re-opened in January, 1562.

After four sessions, of which it is unnecessary to speak, the fathers treated in the twenty-first the question of communion in one kind, the sacrifice of the mass in the twenty-second; and in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth the sacraments of holy orders and matrimony. In the twenty-fifth, holden on the 3d and 4th of December, 1563, the doctrine of purgatory, images, invocation of saints, and indulgences was propounded, and the council concluded with the usual acclamations and subscriptions. The decrees of the former sessions under various pontificates were confirmed and subscribed to by two hundred and fifty.

five fathers. The ambassadors of kings also subscribed, as *witnesses*, in a different schedule. Among the subscribing bishops appear the names of three Irish and one English prelate.

The council was *confirmed* solemnly by the pope in January of the following year. Its doctrinal decisions were received by the whole Catholic world with the readiest and fullest acquiescence; although its disciplinary enactments have not been in every particular allowed the force of law even in all Catholic countries. The reason of this difference is obvious. There was nothing novel in the doctrine; in the regulations of discipline, wise and wholesome as they are, there was often a strong contrast with long-established usage and locally prevailing jurisprudence. It is most absurd to confound things so distinct; and equally unfair, in estimating the character of the council, to overlook the services which it rendered to morals, and the reformation (in the true sense of the word) which it *accomplished* in every department of ecclesiastical polity.

We should here glance at the constellation of learning and piety which shone in this celebrated assembly; but it is time to bring this note to a close. And it cannot be more appropriately concluded than in the words of an eminent Protestant writer of the present day. They bear upon the absurd charge of innovation in doctrine by the council of Trent.

"A strange notion," says Mr. Hallam, in his *History of Literature*, "has been started of late years in *England*, that the council of Trent made important innovations in the previously established doctrines of the western Church; an hypothesis so paradoxical in respect to public opinion, and it may be added, so prodigiously at variance with the known facts of ecclesiastical history, that we cannot but admire the facility with which it has been taken up. It will appear by reading the accounts of the sessions of the council, either in Father Paul or in any more favorable historian, that even in certain points, such as justification, which had not been clearly laid down before, the Tridentine decrees were most conformable with the sense of the majority of those doctors who had obtained the highest reputation, and that upon what are usually styled the distinctive characteristics of the Church of Rome—namely, transubstantiation, purgatory, and invocation of the saints and the Virgin, they assert nothing but what has been so engrafted into the faith of this part of Europe, as to have been rejected by no one without suspicion or imputation of heresy. . . . No general council ever contained so many persons of eminent learning and ability as that of Trent; nor is there ground for believing that any other ever investigated the questions before it with so much patience, acuteness, temper, and desire of truth. The early councils, unless they be greatly belied, would not bear comparison in these characteristics. Impartiality and freedom from prejudice, no *Protestant* will attribute to the Fathers of Trent; but where will he produce these qualities in an ecclesiastical synod? But it may be said that they had only one leading prejudice, that of determining theological faith according to the tradition of the Catholic Church, as handed down to their own age. The one point of authority conceded, I am not aware that they can be proved to have decided wrong, or at least against all reasonable evidence. Let those who have imbibed a different opinion ask themselves whether they have read Sarpi through with any attention, especially as to those sessions of the Tridentine council which preceded its suspension in 1547."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AMERICAN PREFACE.....	ii
PREFACE TO THE LONDON EDITION.....	iii
THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.....	vii

THE CONFERENCE.

I. Preparation for the Conference, and particular Instruction.....	13
II. The Conference.....	31
III. Sequel of the Conference.....	57

REFLECTIONS ON A TREATISE OF M. CLAUDE.

Preliminary Observations.....	63
FIRST REFLECTION.—On M. Claude's answer to the Acts extracted from the Discipline of the Reformed.....	63
SECOND REFLECTION.—On one of the propositions acknowledged by M. Claude in the Conference, and on the examen he prescribes after the Church's judgment.....	70
THIRD REFLECTION.—On another proposition acknowledged by M. Claude in the Conference.—The manner of instructing Christians explained.—Necessity of the Church's authority to know and understand the Scripture.....	76
FOURTH REFLECTION.—On M. Claude objecting the same difficulty to us about the Church as we do to him about the Scripture.....	78
FIFTH REFLECTION.—On M. Claude alleging the practice of the Greek Church and the like.....	80
SIXTH REFLECTION.—On M. Claude's attempt to make the discussion turn on the instruction of children.....	81
SEVENTH REFLECTION.—On his describing me as embarrassed in this part of the dispute.....	87
EIGHTH REFLECTION.—On another proposition acknowledged by M. Claude in the Conference.—How all false Churches are and have been established.....	88
NINTH REFLECTION.—On the Church's visibility.—Misconception of my doctrine on the part of M. Claude....	91
TENTH REFLECTION.—On the Reformed Confession of Faith.—Its acknowledging no Church but such as is visible.—M. Claude's answer to this difficulty.....	94
ELEVENTH REFLECTION.—On M. Claude's own acknowledgment of the Church's perpetual visibility.....	96

	PAGE
TWELFTH REFLECTION.—Two of M. Claude's principal objections resolved by his own doctrine.....	99
THIRTEENTH AND LAST REFLECTION.—M. Claude's doctrine leads manifestly to the inference that there is no salvation but in the Roman Church.....	103
APPENDIX	123

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